三国志 21

孔明の出廬

横山光輝



希望コミックス74

SANGOKUSHI

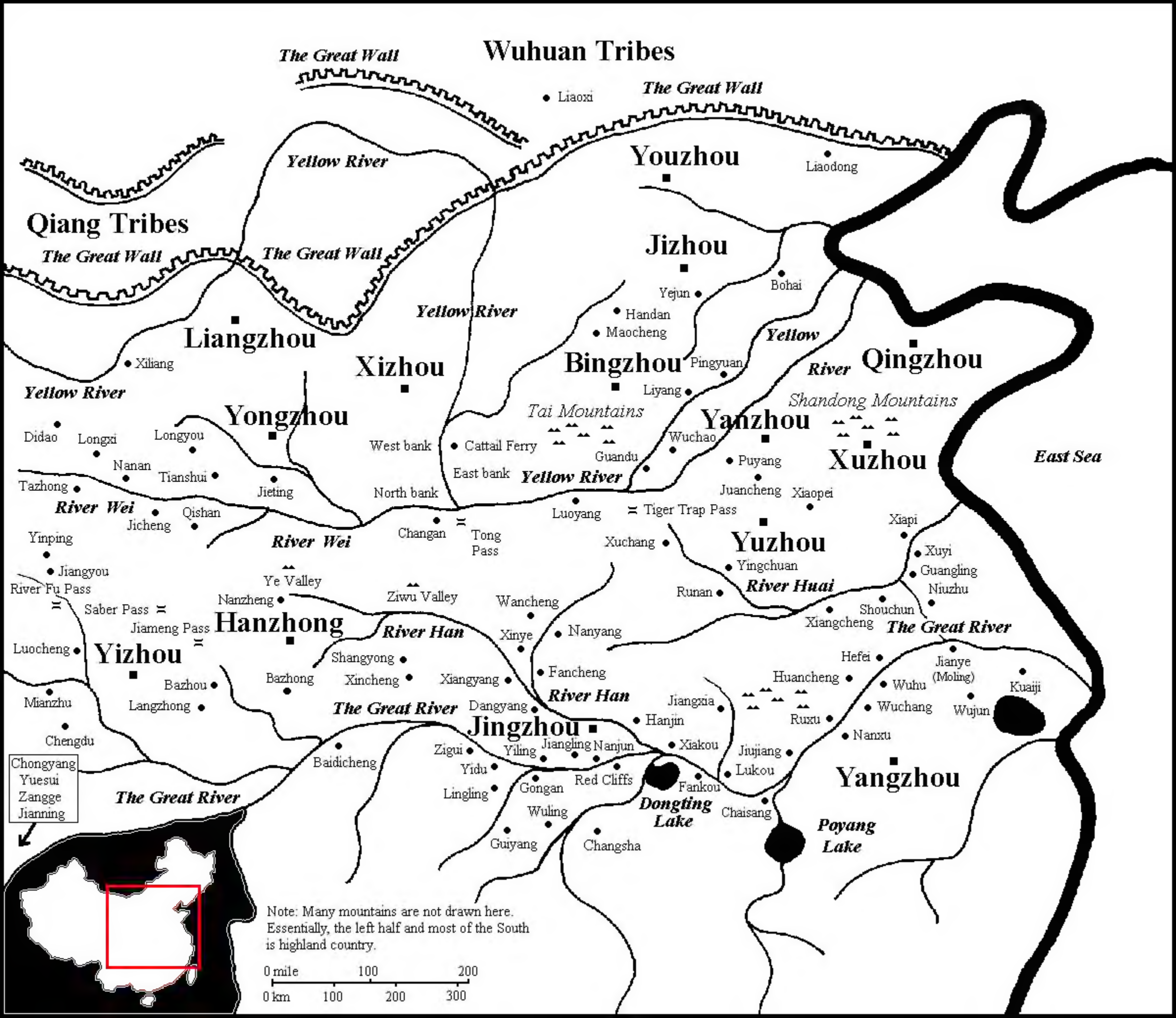
21

KONGMING STEPS FORTH

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU



ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS

PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND



CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER. AS OF VOLUME 20, HE HAS DEFEATED YUAN SHAO, BRINGING ALL OF NORTHERN CHINA UNDER HIS CONTROL.



CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.



CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.



CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.



EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS WHO THEN PRESENTED HER TO EMPEROR LING. SHE SOON BECAME EMPEROR LING'S FAVOURITE CONSORT AND GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE LIU BIAN. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY LI RU WHEN DONG ZHUO CAME TO POWER.



DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE MIGHT GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.



DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.



DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.



DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.



GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING AND FRIEND TO LIU BEI. HE WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO AFTER THE LATTER TRICKS HIM AND KILLS HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.



GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.



GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).



JIA XU:
THE SHREWD STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO ZHANG XIU. HE AND ZHANG XIU PLOTS A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, BUT SUCCEEDS IN KILLING DIAN WEI. IN VOLUME 16, HE AND ZHANG XIU DEFECT TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.



LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU REBELS.



LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. AFTER LOSING XUZHOU TO CAO CAO, HE IS CURRENTLY UNDER THE CARE OF LIU BIAO.



LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE IS CURRENTLY FACING DOMESTIC TROUBLES OVER THE PROBLEM OF WHICH SON TO MAKE HIS HEIR (LIU QI, LIU CONG).



LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):
FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN. HE BECAME THE EMPEROR WHEN DONG ZHUO FORCIBLY DETHRONED HIS HALF-BROTHER LIU BIAN.



LU BU:
HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR IN THE LAND WHO RIDES ON THE FASTEST HORSE IN THE LAND, THE RED HARE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES (HOU CHENG, WEI XU, SONG XIAN), WHO HANDED HIM OVER TO CAO CAO. HE BEGS CAO CAO FOR MERCY BUT IS EXECUTED DUE TO LIU BEI'S DISAGREEMENT.



MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIAN AND FATHER OF MA CHAO. UNLIKE THE ACTUAL HISTORICAL FIGURE, HE IS DEPICTED AS A HAN LOYALIST WHO SIGNS DONG CHENG'S BLOOD SEAL PLEDGE.



SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.



SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. IN VOLUME 19, ASSASSINS MAKE A FAILED ATTEMPT AT HIS LIFE, BUT SUCCEEDS IN SEVERELY WEAKENING HIM. HIS HEALTH DECLINES FURTHER AS HE IS DRIVEN MAD BY THE SPIRIT OF YU JI, WHICH EVENTUALLY LEADS TO HIS DEATH.



SUN JIAN:
BORN IN WU COMMANDERY, HE WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. IN VOLUME 5, HE PARTICIPATES IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. DURING THIS PERIOD, HE FINDS THE IMPERIAL SEAL, WHICH CAUSES YUAN SHAO AND LIU BIAO TO TURN ON HIM. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIES TO EXACT HIS REVENGE ON LIU BIAO, ONLY TO BE KILLED IN BATTLED.



SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE. AS OF THE END OF VOLUME 19, HE HAS SUCCEEDED HIS OLDER BROTHER SUN CE AS THE RULER OF WU STATE.



TAISHI CI:
SUN CE'S TRUSTED GENERAL WHO DEFECTED TO SERVE SUN CE AFTER BEING CAPTURED IN VOLUME 11.



TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.



THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.



WANG YUN:
AN OLD MAN WHO HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN HAN IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHANG IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).



WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.



XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.



XU CHU:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.



XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 20, HE WAS MADE THE COMMANDING ADVISOR OF LIU BEI'S ARMY AND LED THEM TO VICTORY AGAINST CAO REN'S NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR FORCES.



XUN YU:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S MOST TALENTED ADVISORS.



YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.



YUAN SHAO:
ORIGINALLY AN ADVISOR TO HE JIN, HE LEFT THE CAPITAL TO BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF BOHAI WHEN DONG ZHUO CAME TO RULE OVER LUOYANG. HE IS CURRENTLY THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU AND IS TRYING TO EXPAND HIS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE BY WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO.



YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.



ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.



ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.



ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.



ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO WHO LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE MEETS UP WITH LIU BEI AND FINALLY BECOMES HIS RETAINER.



ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS
PART 2: OTHER MINOR CHARACTERS



CAI MAO:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER LIU BIAO AND UNCLE OF LIU CONG. IN VOLUME 20, BECAUSE LIU BEI ADVISES LIU BIAO TO NAME LIU QI AS THE HEIR OF JINGZHOU INSTEAD OF LIU CONG, CAI MAO ATTEMPTS TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI.



CAO REN:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO.



CAO HONG:
GENERAL AND COUSIN TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 6, HE SAVES CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH.



CAO SONG:
CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED BY TAO QIAN'S ESCORT AND FORMER YELLOW TURBAN, ZHANG KAI.



DING YUAN:
GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN, EARNING DONG ZHUO'S WRATH. IN VOLUME 4, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS FOSTER-SON, LU BU, WHO THEN DEFECTS TO SERVE DONG ZHUO.



EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:
MOTHER TO THE FORMER EMPEROR LING AND GRANDMOTHER TO EMPEROR XIAN. IN VOLUME 3, EMPRESS HE ORDERS FOR HER DEATH TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S THRONE AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.



GAO SHUN:
ONE OF LU BU'S TRUSTED GENERALS. HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH HIS LORD IN VOLUME 14.



GUO SI:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.



HE JIN:
OLDER BROTHER OF EMPRESS HE. ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER BECAME EMPEROR LING'S CONSORT. IN VOLUME 3, HE ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE THE TEN ATTENDANTS, ONLY TO BE DISSUADED FROM DOING SO BY HIS YOUNGER SISTER. HE IS LATER KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS.



HOU CHENG:
ONE OF LU BU'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 14, HE, ALONG WITH GENERALS WEI XU AND SONG XIAN, BETRAYS LU BU AND DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.



HUA XIONG:
FAMED GENERAL SERVING UNDER DONG ZHUO. IN VOLUME 5, HE DEFEATS SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT IS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU.



JI PING:
IMPERIAL PHYSICIAN OF HAN WHO, WITH DONG CHENG, PLOTS TO POISON CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 17, CAO CAO DISCOVERS THEIR PLOT AND EXECUTES HIM.



JIANG QIN:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.



LADY FUYOU:
FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE MASSCRED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.



LADY MI:
LIU BEI'S FIRST WIFE.



LI JUE:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND GUO SI TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.



LIU BIAN:
THE SON OF EMPRESS HE AND BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, EMPEROR LING. IN VOLUME 4, HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.



LU ZHI:
LIU BEI'S FORMER TEACHER AND THE PALACE COMMANDER WHO WAS PLACED IN CHARGE OF LEADING THE HAN ARMY AGAINST THE YELLOW TURBANS. HE WAS LATER DEMOTED FOR FAILING TO BRIBE ONE OF THE IMPERIAL MESSENGERS.



ZHANG BAO:
ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.



ZHANG JIAO:
LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION.
HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.



ZHANG ZHAO/ZHANG HONG:
THE TWO GENIUSES OF JIANGDONG, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TWO ZHANGS." AFTER SUN CE'S ADMANT INSISTENCE, THEY DECIDE TO SERVE HIM AND HELP HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER JIANGNAN AND JIANGDONG.



ZHOU TAI:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

三国志

SANGOKUSHI
(ROMANCE OF THE
THREE KINGDOMS)

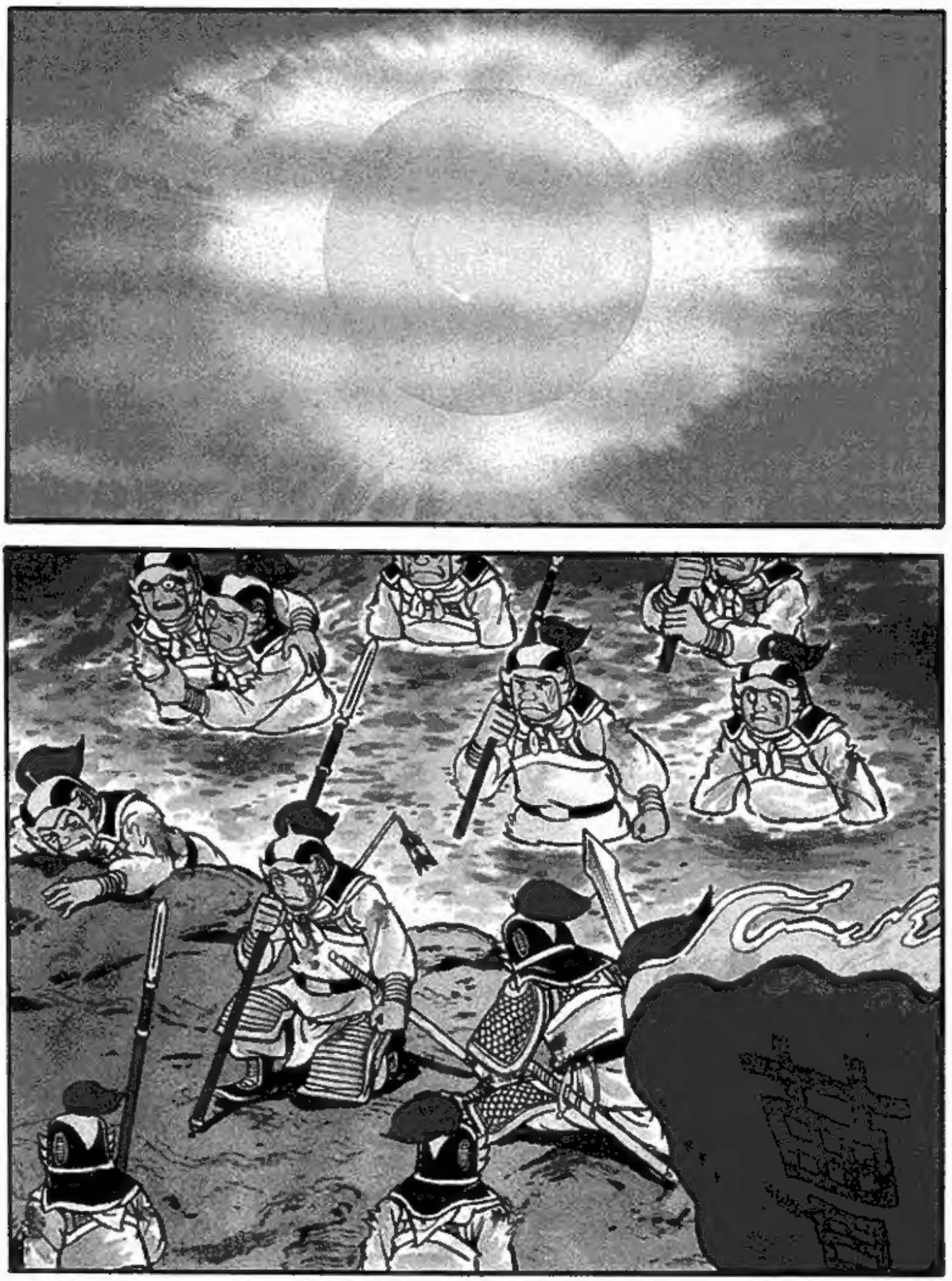
VOLUME 21
KONGMING STEPS FORTH

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〔月刊『コミックトム』掲載〕

LIU FENG

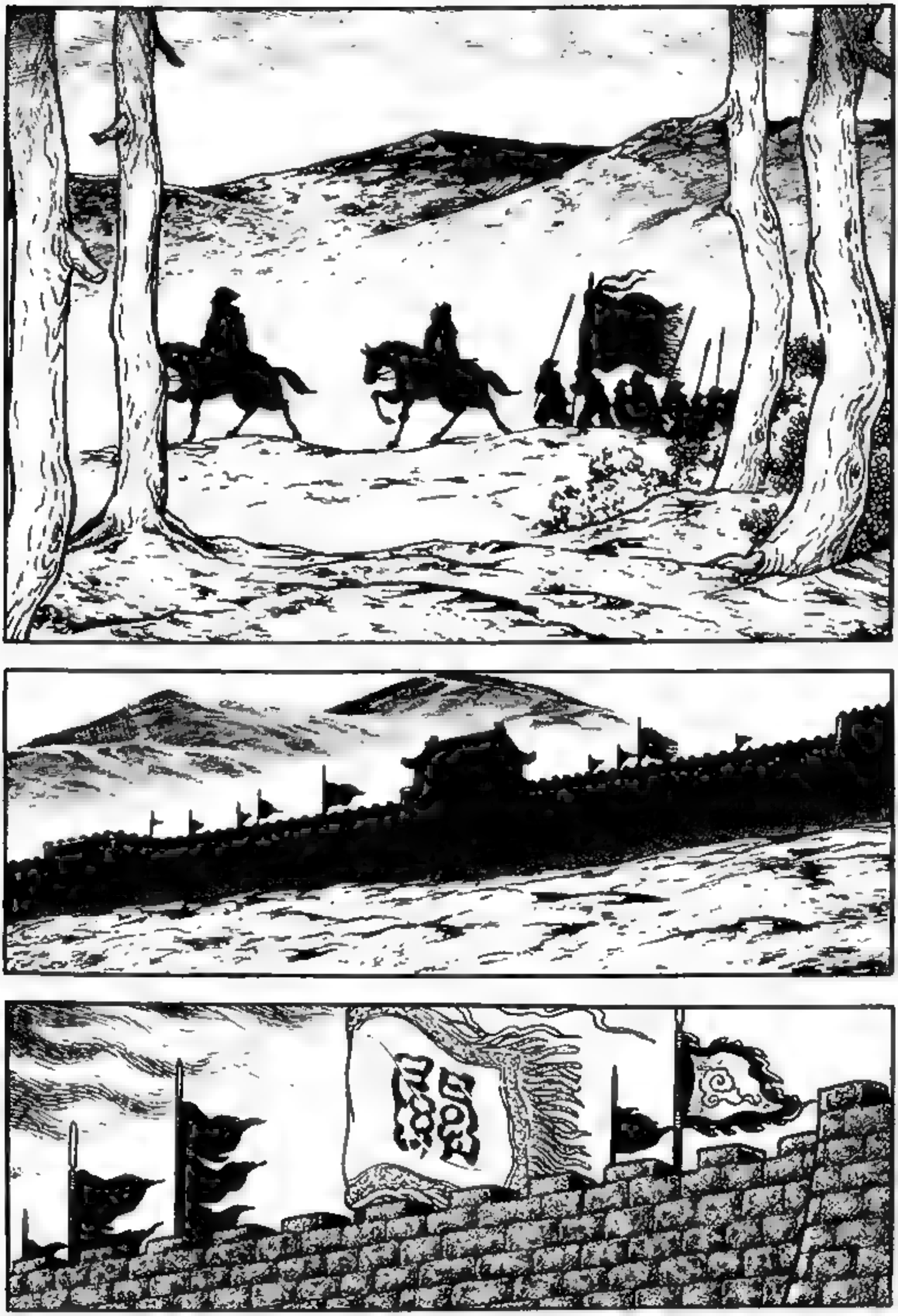


WE MUST NEVER MOBILIZE OUR FORCES SO RECKLESSLY AGAIN.

WE SHOULD BE FINE NOW THAT WE'VE RETREATED THIS FAR. NOW LET US RETURN TO FANCHENG AND REORGANIZE OUR ARMY.

LIU BEI... I SWEAR I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE ONE DAY...

I KNOW, I KNOW! SAY NO MORE.



WHOSE FLAG IS THAT!?

HMM?

關

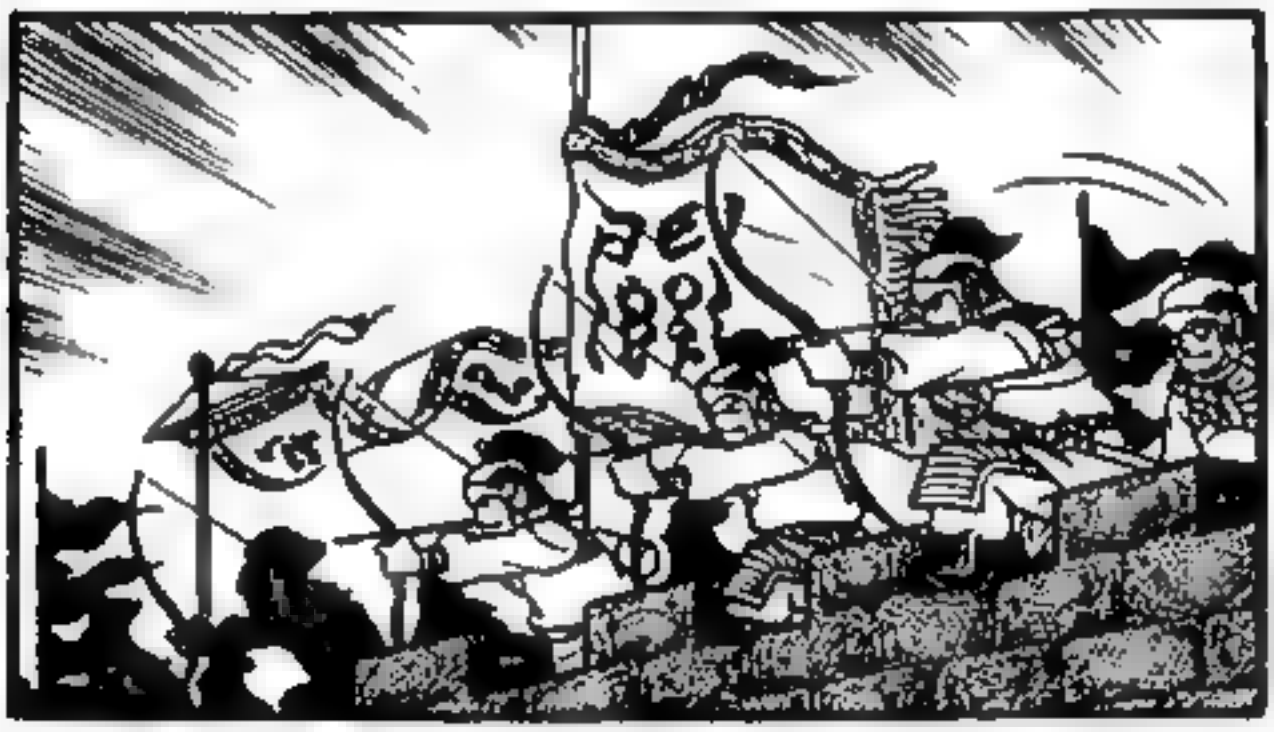
I, GUAN YU, CAPTURED FANCHENG AGES AGO!

AH, CAO REN. I ALMOST GREW SICK AND TIRED FROM WAITING FOR YOU TO ARRIVE.

*FLAG (關) READS "GUAN" FOR GUAN YU



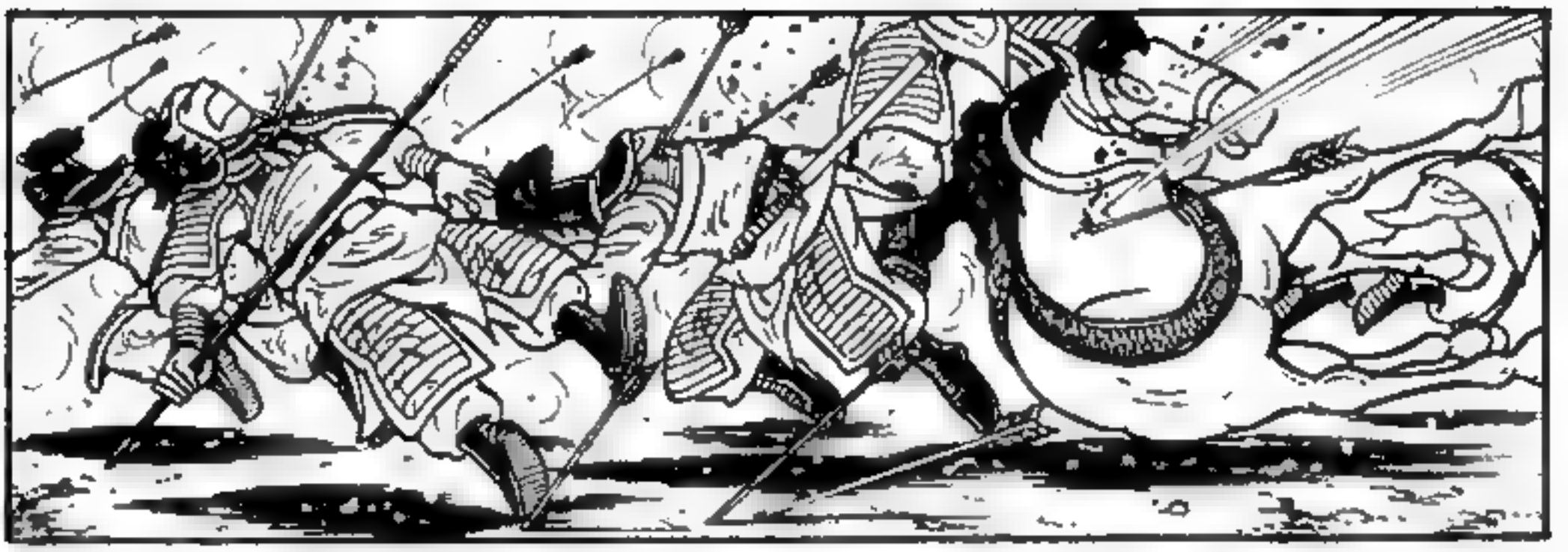

TROOPS! LET US GIVE GENERAL CAO REN A MOST HEARTFELT WELCOME!






GAHHH!


AGH!






RETREAT!
RETREAT!


NOW LET US EXTERMINATE THE REST.

CHARGE!

AHH!

ACK!











YOU'VE ALL FOUGHT SPLENDIDLY. IT IS THANKS TO ALL YOUR HARD EFFORTS THAT WE WERE ABLE TO CAPTURE FANCHENG.


OH?
MY LORD, THE LOCAL MAGISTRATE LIU MI HAS COME TO MEET WITH SIR.


NOW, LET US CELEBRATE OUR VICTORY WITH A DRINK.




THANK YOU FOR COMING.
IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, SIR. I AM LIU MI.

PLEASE, COME THIS WAY.

I AM SURE THE CITIZENS HERE ARE QUITE UNEASY SINCE MY FORCES HAVE CAPTURED FANCHENG.

I SHALL GLADLY PASS ON SIR'S MESSAGE TO THE COMMON-FOLK.

WHY YES, OF COURSE. I'VE LONG HEARD OF YOUR KINDNESS TO THE PEOPLE.

BUT THEY NEEDN'T WORRY FOR I HAVE NO INTENTION OF MAKING THE PEOPLE SUFFER. I HOPE SIR CAN PASS ON THIS MESSAGE TO THEM.

ACTUALLY, HE'S MY NEPHEW.

BY THE WAY, IS THAT YOUNG MAN YOUR SON?

I SEE. WELL, HE LOOKS LIKE QUITE THE GALLANT AND HANDSOME LAD.

HIS NAME IS KOU FENG, SON OF LORD KOU OF LUO. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS PARENTS PASSED AWAY WHILE HE WAS ONLY A CHILD SO I'VE TAKEN HIM IN.

WOULD YOU MIND ALLOWING ME TO ADOPT HIM AS MY OWN SON?

YES.

KOU FENG, YOU'VE TRULY BEEN BLESSED WITH GOOD LUCK.

W-WHY, THAT WOULD BE MY GREATEST HONOUR!

YES.

NOW, THEN. GO GREET YOUR NEW FATHER.

HAHA, WHAT A BLESSED DAY IT IS TODAY!

I, KOU FENG, HEREBY ADOPT THE SURNAME TO BECOME LIU FENG, SON OF LIU BEI.

I COULD NOT BE MORE HAPPY TO HAVE OBTAINED SUCH A SPLENDID SON.

YES.

BE SURE TO BE A PIOUS SON.

THANK YOU, LIU MI.

THEN I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE SO I CAN RELIEVE THE CITIZENS FROM THEIR WORRIES.

YES.

WHAT!? YOU'VE ADOPTED LIU MI'S NEPHEW AS YOUR NEW SON!?

BUT WHY? DOES MY LORD NOT ALREADY HAVE ADOU (LIU SHAN)?

HAS MY LORD ALREADY FORGOTTEN OF LIU BIAO'S ONGOING DOMESTIC TROUBLES?

I KNOW, BUT THIS YOUNG LAD WAS TOO FINE TO PASS UP.

HMM... I GUESS I WAS A LITTLE RASH...

WE'RE MERELY WORRIED THAT THE SAME MIGHT HAPPEN TO BROTHER.

THIS AIN'T LIKE YOU, BROTHER.

BUT WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. PLEASE SAY NO MORE.

I'VE JUST FINISHED SURVEYING THIS CASTLE.

AH, SHAN FU.

MY LORD.

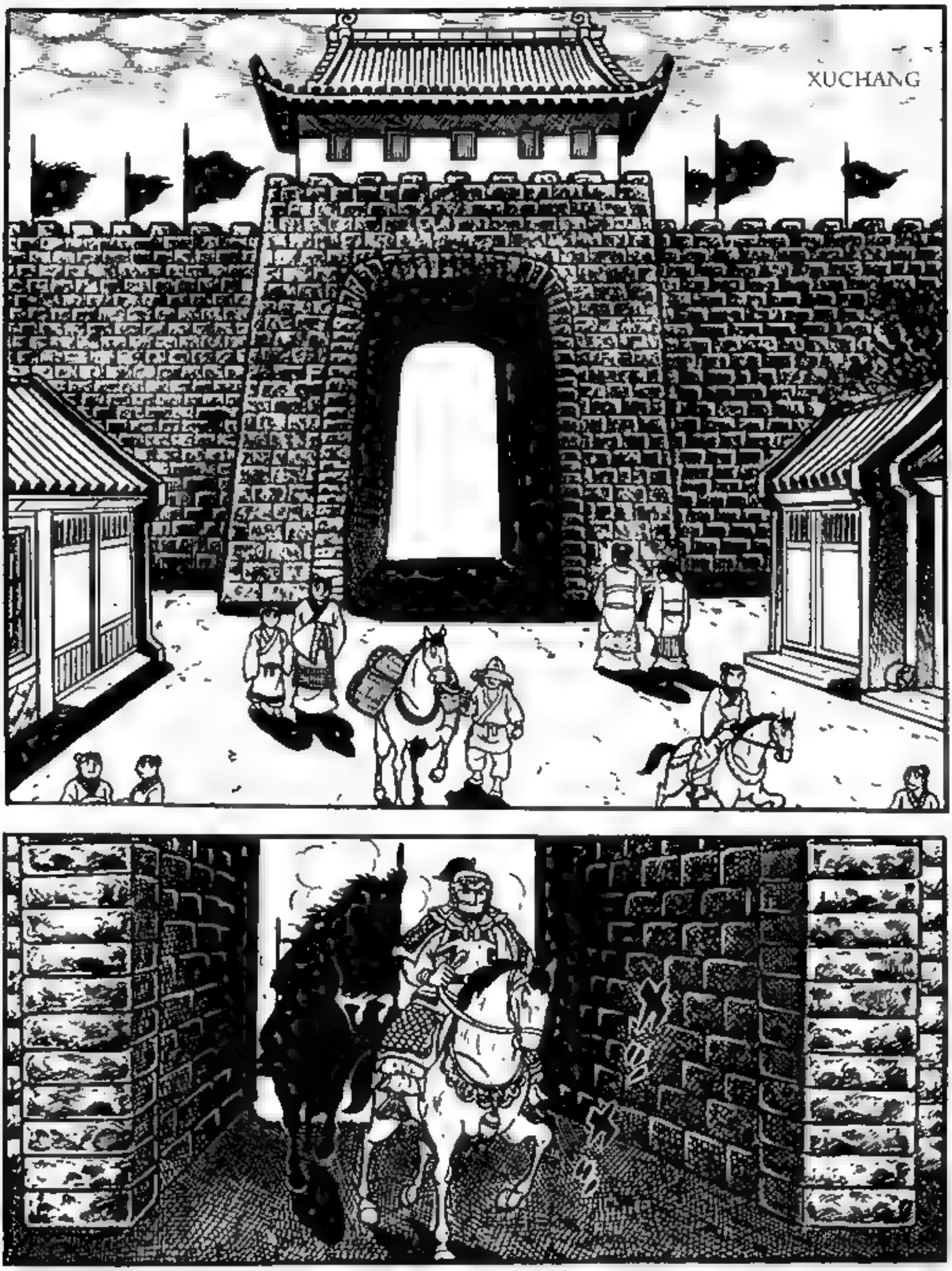

IT WOULD BE BEST TO LEAVE ZHAO ZILONG IN CHARGE OF THIS CASTLE WHILE THE REST OF US RETURN TO XINYE.


WE NEEDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT INCREASING THIS CASTLE'S DEFENSES.


IS THAT SO? THEN I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY.


AND SO, WITH A NEW SON AND A CASTLE UNDER HIS CONTROL, LIU BEI RETURNED TO XINYE

SHAN FU'S TRUE IDENTITY



?

HM?

OH DEAR...

BUT JUST WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED TO THEM?

ISN'T THAT GENERAL CAO REN AND HIS TROOPS?


宮內
YES, CHANCELLOR. LU XIANG AND LU KUANG WERE KILLED IN BATTLE AND ONLY A FEW SOLDIERS HAVE SURVIVED.
WHAT? CAO REN LOST FANCHENG AND CAME BACK DEFEATED?

YES, CHANCELLOR.

BUT DON'T LIU BEI'S FORCES AT XINYE ONLY NUMBER TWO OR THREE THOUSAND...?

IT APPEARS SO. HOW DOES SIR WISH TO DEAL WITH CAO REN?

SO AN ARMY OF 30,000 WAS ANNHILATED BY ONLY 3000 SOLDIERS?

BRING HIM HERE TO ME.

UNBELIEVABLE...

HE'LL LOSE HIS HEAD FOR SURE.

CAO REN WON'T GET OUT OF THIS ONE.

YOU SAID IT.

TALK ABOUT AN EMBARASSING DEFEAT!

IT IS YOUR LOYAL SUBJECT, CAO REN. I'M AFRAID I HAVE NO RIGHT TO LOOK AT MY LORD IN THE FACE AFTER MY SHAMEFUL DEFEAT.

YES...

I'VE HEARD YOU SUFFERED A CRUSHING DEFEAT TO LIU BEI, IS THAT RIGHT?

THE ENEMY ARMY HAD A SHREWD STRATEGIST NAMED SHAN FU.

WHAT I'M WONDERING IS HOW EXACTLY THAT WAS POSSIBLE WHEN YOUR FORCES HAD NEARLY 10 TIMES MORE SOLDIERS.

SHAN FU?

FOLLOWING THAT, I MOBILIZED MY ENTIRE ARMY TO XINYE, WHERE WE SET UP THE EIGHT DOCKED GATES.

LU KUANG AND LU XIANG WERE EASILY KILLED AFTER BEING LURED INTO SHAN FU'S TRAP.

BUT HE KNEW HOW TO EASILY DISMANTLE OUR FORMATION BY ENTERING BIRTH AND EXITING EXPANSE.

SO IS THAT YOUR EXCUSE FOR DEFEAT?

I THEN ATTEMPTED A NIGHT RAID BUT THE ENEMIES HAD ALREADY ANTICIPATED THAT AND SET UP A FIRE TRAP.

NO, NO, THAT'S FINE. DEFEATS CAN HAPPEN IN BATTLE EVEN TO THE BEST OF MEN.

I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEFEAT. PUNISH ME AS YOU WISH, MY LORD.

I'M TELLING YOU TO GO HOME AND REST.

WHAT?

YES, MY LORD!

HE KNOWS THAT YOU CAN'T WIN ALL YOUR BATTLES SO THERE'S NO NEED TO GET OVEREMOTIONAL ABOUT A SINGLE LOSS.

THIS IS WHAT MAKES OUR LORD SO GREAT.

WELL, ISN'T THIS SURPRISING... NOT EVEN A SLAP ON THE WRIST.

YES, SIR.

CAO REN CLEARLY SAID THAT LIU BEI HAS A TALENTED STRATEGIST CALLED SHAN FU, DID HE NOT?

I DO, MY LORD.

THERE ARE MANY TALENTED MEN ACROSS THE LAND BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER HEARD OF HIS NAME. IS THERE ANY AMONG YOU WHO KNOW OF HIM?

HE AND I GREW UP IN THE SAME VILLAGE.

AH, CHENG YU. AND HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?

YES, MY LORD. IN TERMS OF TALENT, I WOULD NOT EVEN MEASURE UP TO HIS FEET.

IS HE AS SMART AS CAO REN CLAIMS?

HMM... WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME MORE ABOUT HIM?

OH? AND WHY DOES HE USE A FAKE NAME?

SHAN FU IS MERELY HIS ALIAS. HIS TRUE NAME IS XU SHU, WHILE HIS COURTESY NAME IS YUANZHI. HE IS QUITE WELL KNOWN IN YINGCHUAN, WHERE HE HAILS FROM.

XU SHU IS A MAN WITH A FIERCELY STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE.

ONE DAY, HE WAS ASKED BY A CLOSE FRIEND TO HELP TAKE REVENGE UPON A MAN WHO HAD WRONGED HIM.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, XU SHU AGREED TO DO SO.

BUT BECAUSE OF THAT, HE BECAME AN OUTLAW.

TO AVOID ARREST, HE DISGUISED HIMSELF BY LETTING DOWN HIS HAIR, DIRTYING HIS FACE WITH ASH, AND PRETENDING TO BE A MADMAN.

BUT HE WAS EVENTU-ALLY CAUGHT.

DURING QUESTIONING, XU SHU REFUSED TO SPEAK A WORD.

STILL UNSURE OF HIS EXACT IDENTITY, THE AUTHORITIES THEN DRAGGED HIM AROUND TOWN AND ASKED IF ANYONE KNEW WHO HE WAS.

BUT NOBODY DARED TO CONFIRM HIS IDENTITY.

NOT ONLY THAT, XU SHU'S CLOSE FRIENDS SOON SNUCK INTO HIS CELL,

AND FREED HIM FROM CAPTIVITY.

SINCE THEN, XU SHU CHANGED HIS NAME TO SHAN FU AND TRAVELLED ACROSS THE LAND.

LAST I HEARD, HE WAS STUDYING UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF SIMA HUI (SHUI JING).

IF I HAD KNOWN EARLIER, I WOULD'VE PAID HIM VERY HANDSOMELY JUST TO INVITE HIM HERE!

TO THINK THAT A MAN OF HIS TALENT WAS STILL HIDING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE...

THERE IS STILL A WAY TO BRING HIM HERE, MY LORD.

WHAT?

BUT ALAS, I NOW HAVE TO FIGHT LIU BEI WHO HAS A MOST CUNNING STRATEGIST BY HIS SIDE...

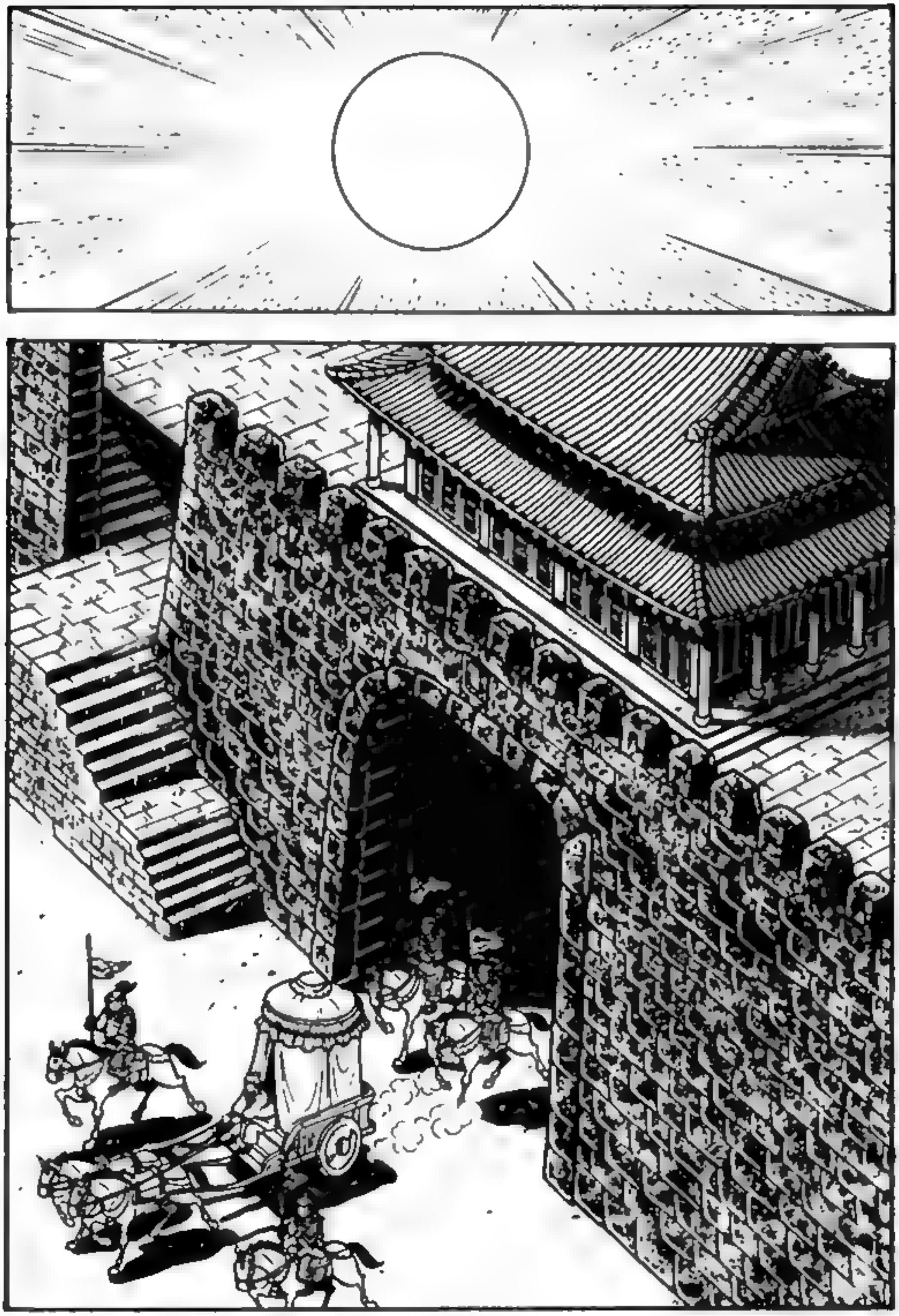
BUT EVER SINCE HE BECAME AN OUTLAW, HIS MOTHER, AN OLD WIDOW, HAD TO LIVE ALONE.

XU SHU HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN FOR HIS FILIAL PIETY.


SO HE'S KNOWN FOR HIS FILIAL PIETY, IS HE...


IF MY LORD WERE TO FIRST BRING HIS MOTHER HERE AND THEN ASK HER TO CALL HER SON, I'M SURE HE WOULD COME AT ONCE.


YES, MY LORD.
ALRIGHT, BRING XU SHU'S MOTHER TO THE CAPITAL AT ONCE.



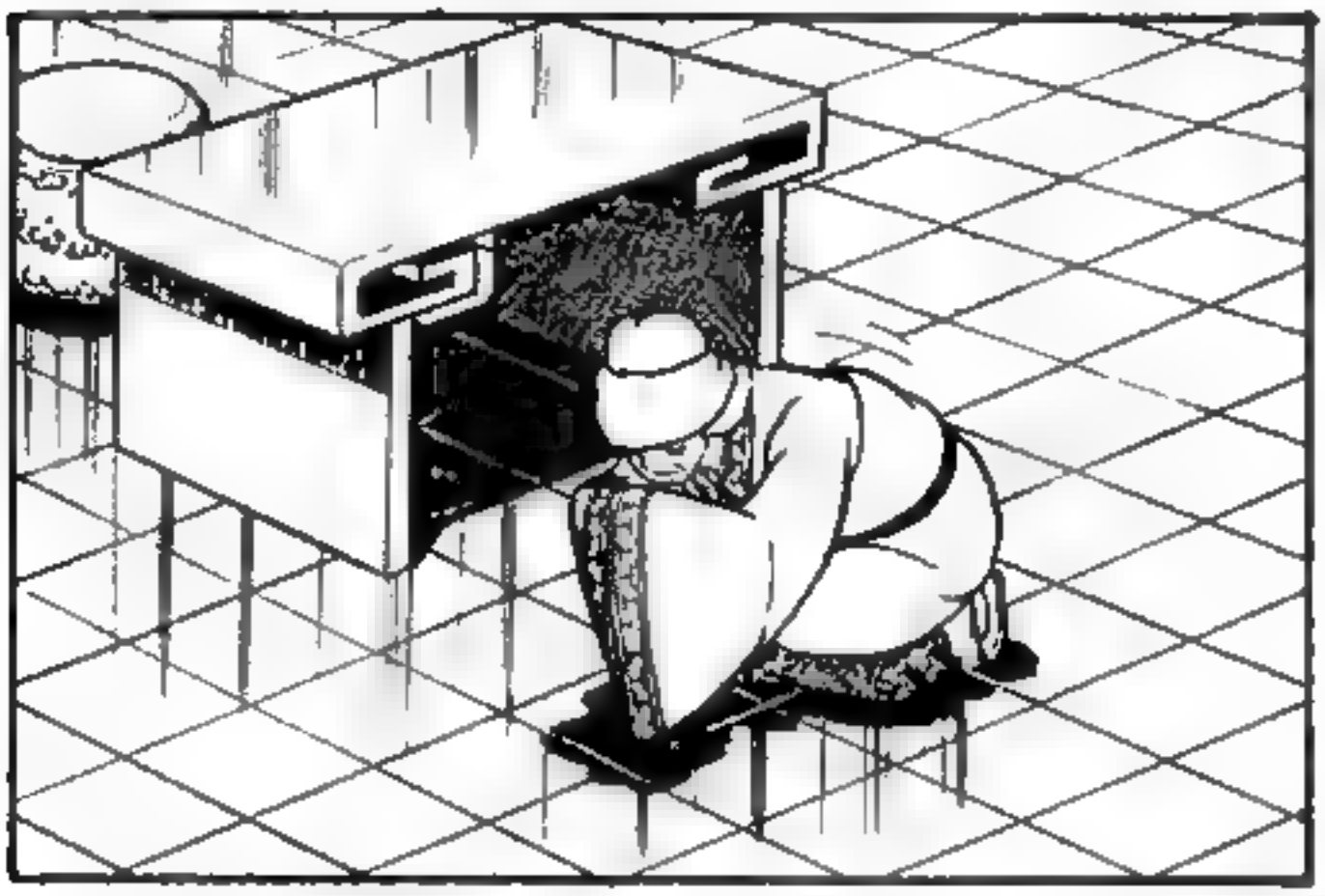
PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP.

WE'VE ARRIVED AT XUCHANG, MA'AM.

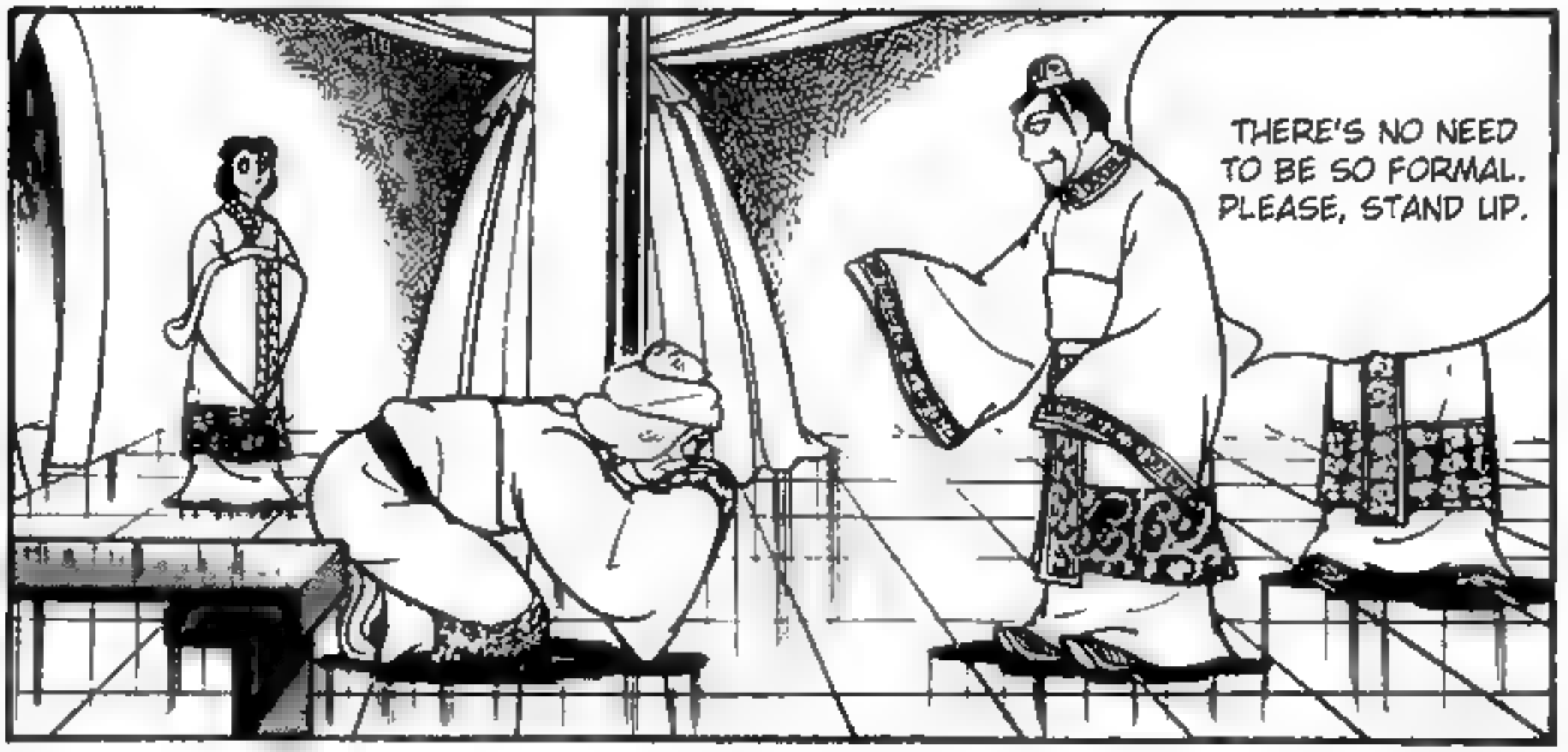
THIS WAY, MA'AM.

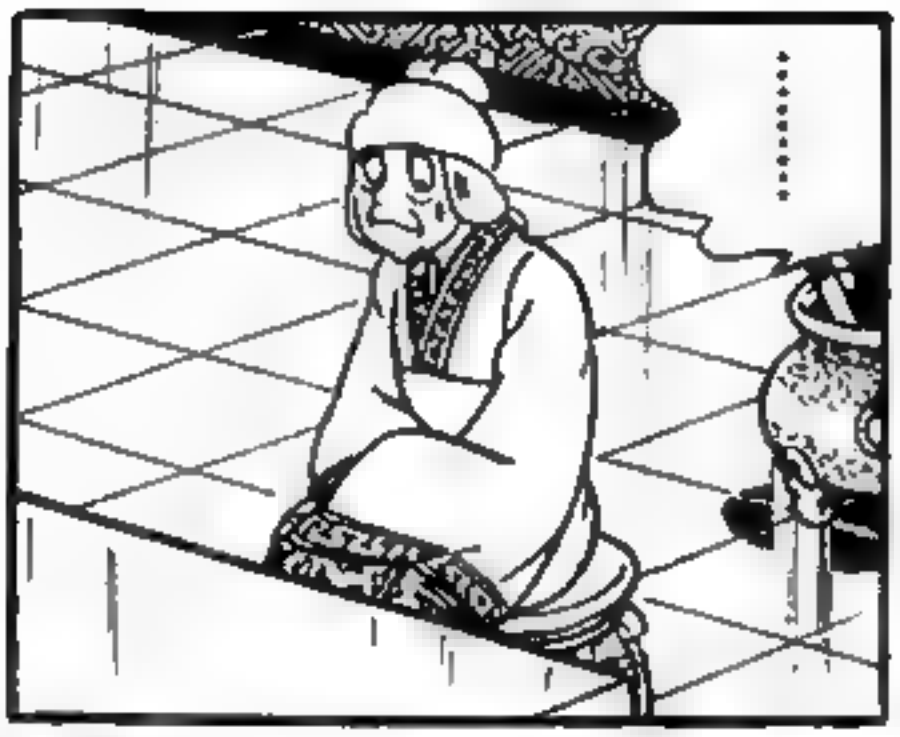
JUST SIT HERE COMFORTABLY AND WAIT WHILE I GO AND INFORM THE CHANCELLOR OF YOUR ARRIVAL.

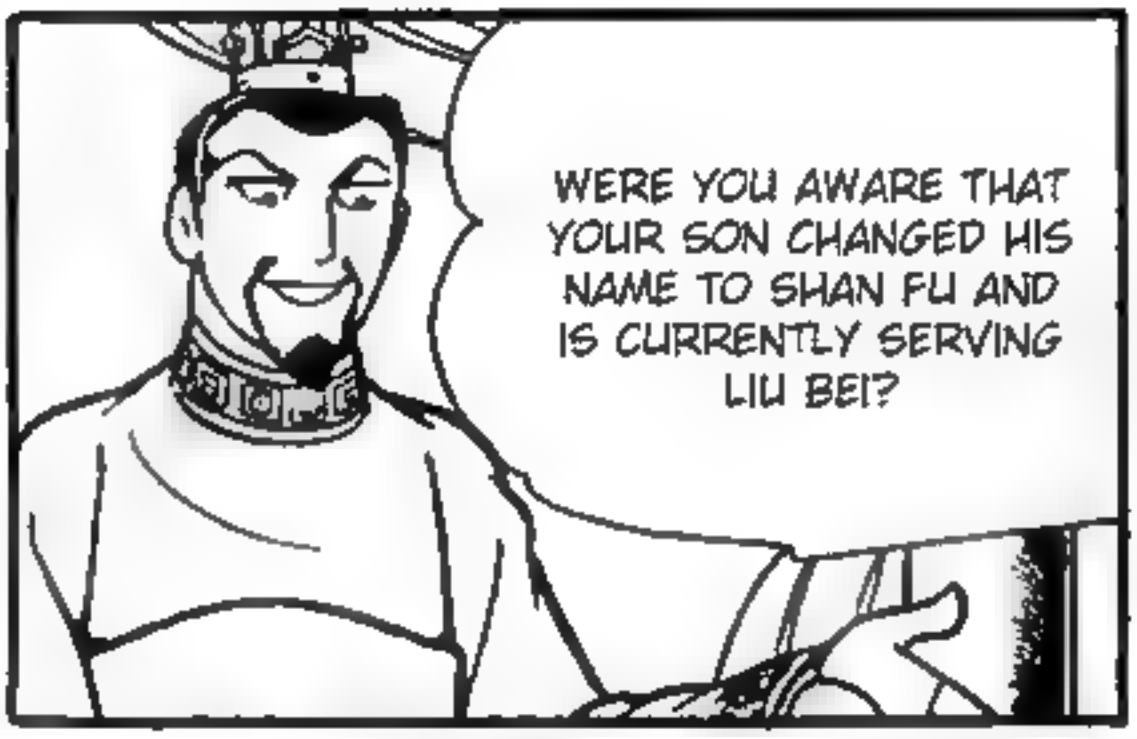







THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SO FORMAL. PLEASE, STAND UP.




WERE YOU AWARE THAT YOUR SON CHANGED HIS NAME TO SHAN FU AND IS CURRENTLY SERVING LIU BEI?


AS HIS MOTHER, DO YOU APPROVE OF THIS?


LIU BEI IS NOTHING BUT A REBEL WITHOUT EVEN A TERRITORY OF HIS OWN. IT IS A WONDER HOW YOUR SON EVER CAME TO SERVE SUCH A MAN.




IF YOU STILL APPROVE OF YOUR SON WORKING FOR SUCH A DESPICABLE VILLAIN, THAT WOULD BE THE SAME AS THROWING A JEWL IN A MUCK HEAP.


LIU BEI WILL EVENTUALLY BE PUNISHED FOR HIS TREACHERY AGAINST HAN SOONER OR LATER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT SENDING A LETTER ASKING HIM TO COME TO XUCHANG?

A MAN AS TALENTED AS YOUR SON COULD EASILY OBTAIN AN IMPORTANT POST IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. IF THAT HAPPENS, YOU AND YOUR SON COULD BOTH PEACEFULLY LIVE IN A LUXURIOUS ESTATE.

BUT EVEN PEOPLE LIKE ME, FROM SIMPLE FARMERS TO WOODCUTTERS, ALL KNOW ABOUT LIU BEI.

I AM MERELY A COUNTRY BUMPKIN WHO KNOWS LITTLE ABOUT THE WORLD'S AFFAIRS.

LIU BEI IS A VIRTUOUS HERO BORN FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE. NOT ONLY THAT, HE IS THE NOBLEST AND KINDEST LORD IN THIS WORLD.

OH? AND WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT HIM?

TRULY, THE IGNORANCE OF COMMONERS IS QUITE ASTOUNDING.

HA HA HA

HA HA

AHA HA!

ALLOW ME TO ENLIGHTEN YOU, MA'AM. THAT LIU BEI IS A MERE STRAWMAT PEDDLER WHO CONVENIENTLY USED THE YELLOW SCARVES REBELLION TO GAIN STANDING AND ARROGANTLY STYLE HIMSELF AS IMPERIAL UNCLE LIU.

WHY, THAT COULDN'T BE ANY MORE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD.

HE'S NO DIFFERENT FROM A BANDIT.

NOW THEN, I WOULD STRONGLY SUGGEST YOU TELL YOUR SON TO COME HERE AT ONCE.

ONLY AN ACT, SO THAT HE MAY DECEIVE THE WORLD.

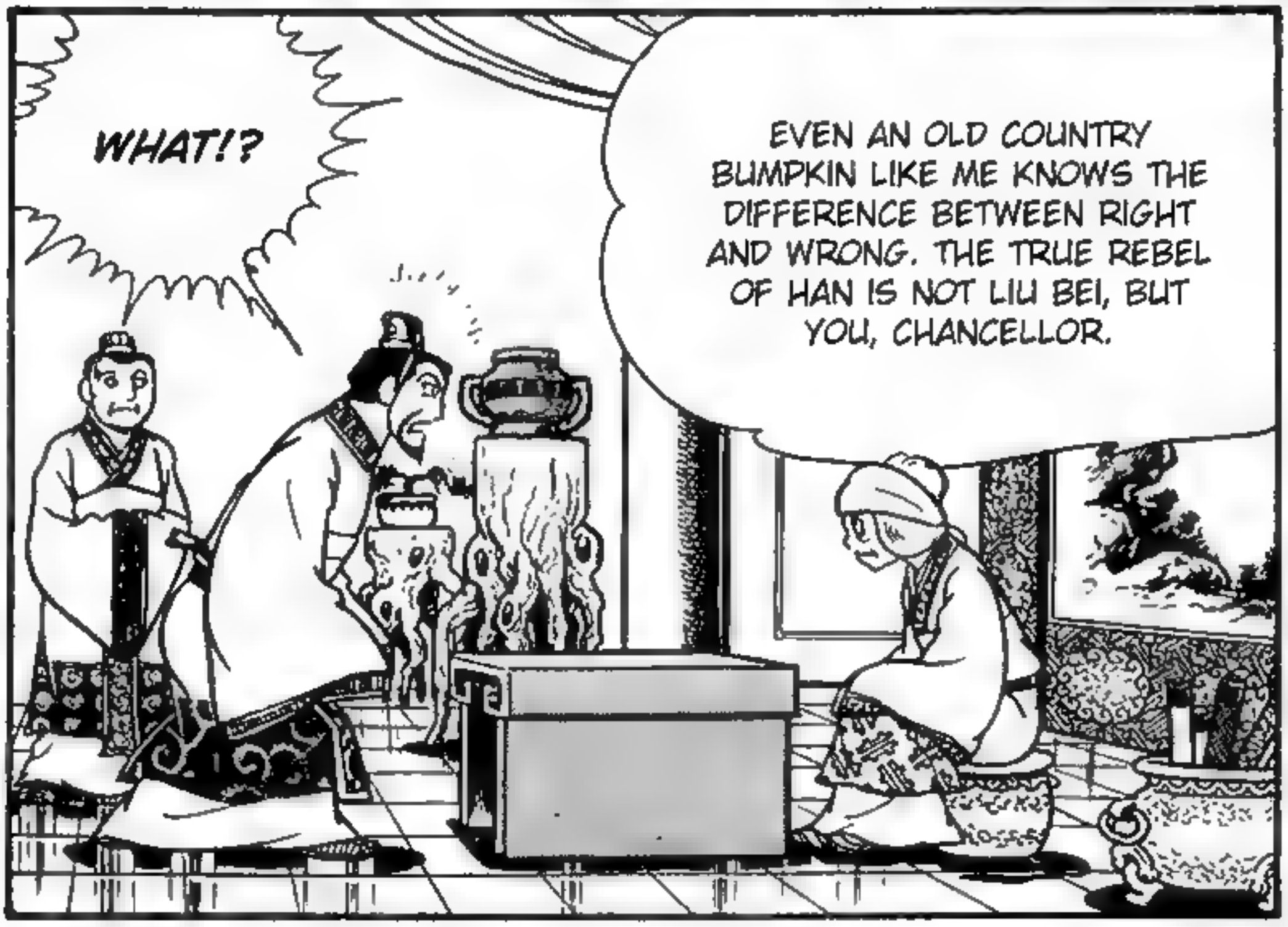
I'VE HEARD THAT HE'S AN EXTREMELY LOYAL MAN WHO WOULD RISK HIS LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF THE EMPEROR.

AND WHY IS THAT? I'VE TOLD YOU HE CAN EASILY FIND FAME AND SUCCESS HERE. SHOULD YOU NOT WRITE THIS LETTER FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SON?

I SIMPLY CAN'T, SIR.


WHAT...?


IT IS FOR THE SAKE OF MY SON THAT I CANNOT WRITE THIS LETTER.


WHAT!?
EVEN AN OLD COUNTRY BUMPKIN LIKE ME KNOWS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG. THE TRUE REBEL OF HAN IS NOT LIU BEI, BUT YOU, CHANCELLOR.


YOU DARE CALL ME, CAO CAO, A REBEL...!?


HOW COULD I FORCE MY BELOVED SON TO STRAY FROM THE PATH OF GOOD AND SERVE A WICKED REBEL?

PLEASE CALM DOWN, CHANCELLOR.

OFF WITH HER HEAD!

PLEASE NOTE HER ATTITUDE, IF YOU WILL, CHANCELLOR.

YOU'RE TELLING ME TO CALM DOWN WHEN THIS OLD LADY CALLED ME A REBEL!?

WHAT?

SHE CLEARLY PREPARED FOR DEATH WHEN SHE SAID THAT.

IF YOU EXECUTE HER, XU SHU WILL ONLY WORK HARDER FOR LIU BEI IN ORDER TO AVENGE HIS MOTHER'S DEATH.

I SEE...

NOT ONLY THAT, THE PEOPLE WILL LOSE THEIR TRUST IN THE CHANCELLOR IF THEY HEAR HE KILLED A POOR DEFENSELESS OLD LADY. IT IS PRECISELY FOR THESE REASONS THAT XU SHU'S MOTHER IS TRYING TO GET HERSELF KILLED.

WITH HIS MOTHER HERE, XU SHU WILL BE TOO DISTRACTED TO SERVE LIU BEI EFFECTIVELY. IN THE MEANTIME, I SHALL TRY MY BEST TO PERSUADE HER.

SIR MUST KEEP HER HERE.

THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

YES, SIR.

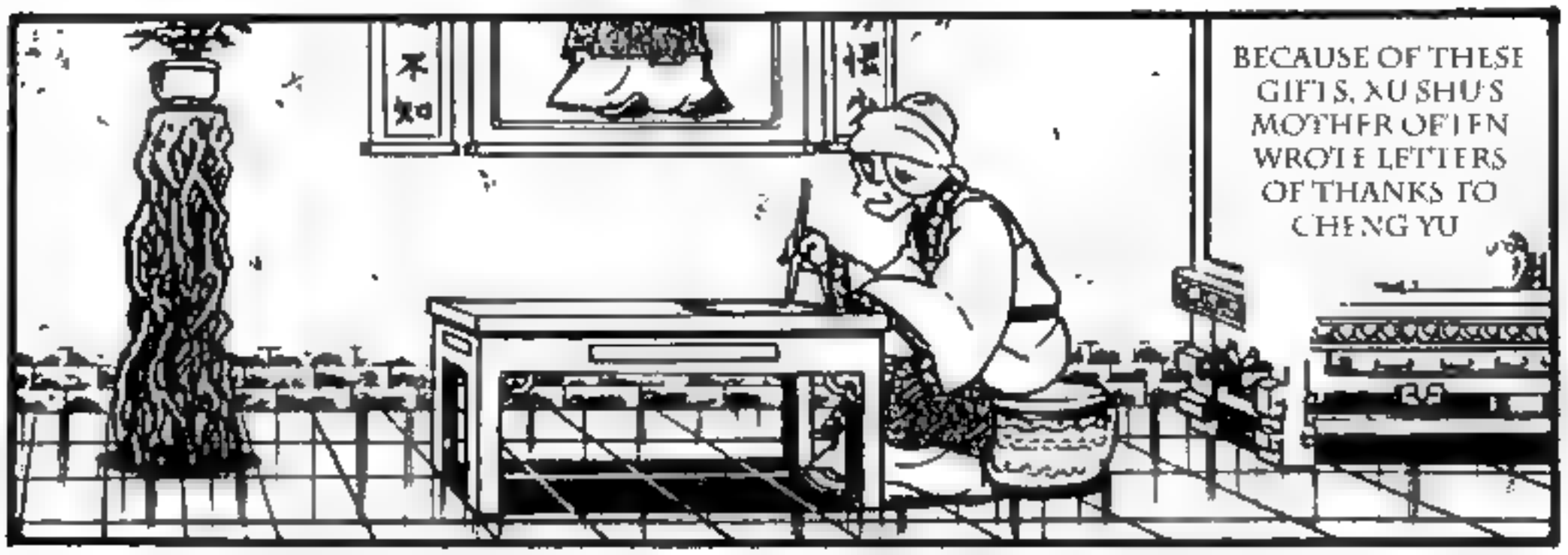
FINE, I SHALL LEAVE HER TO YOU.

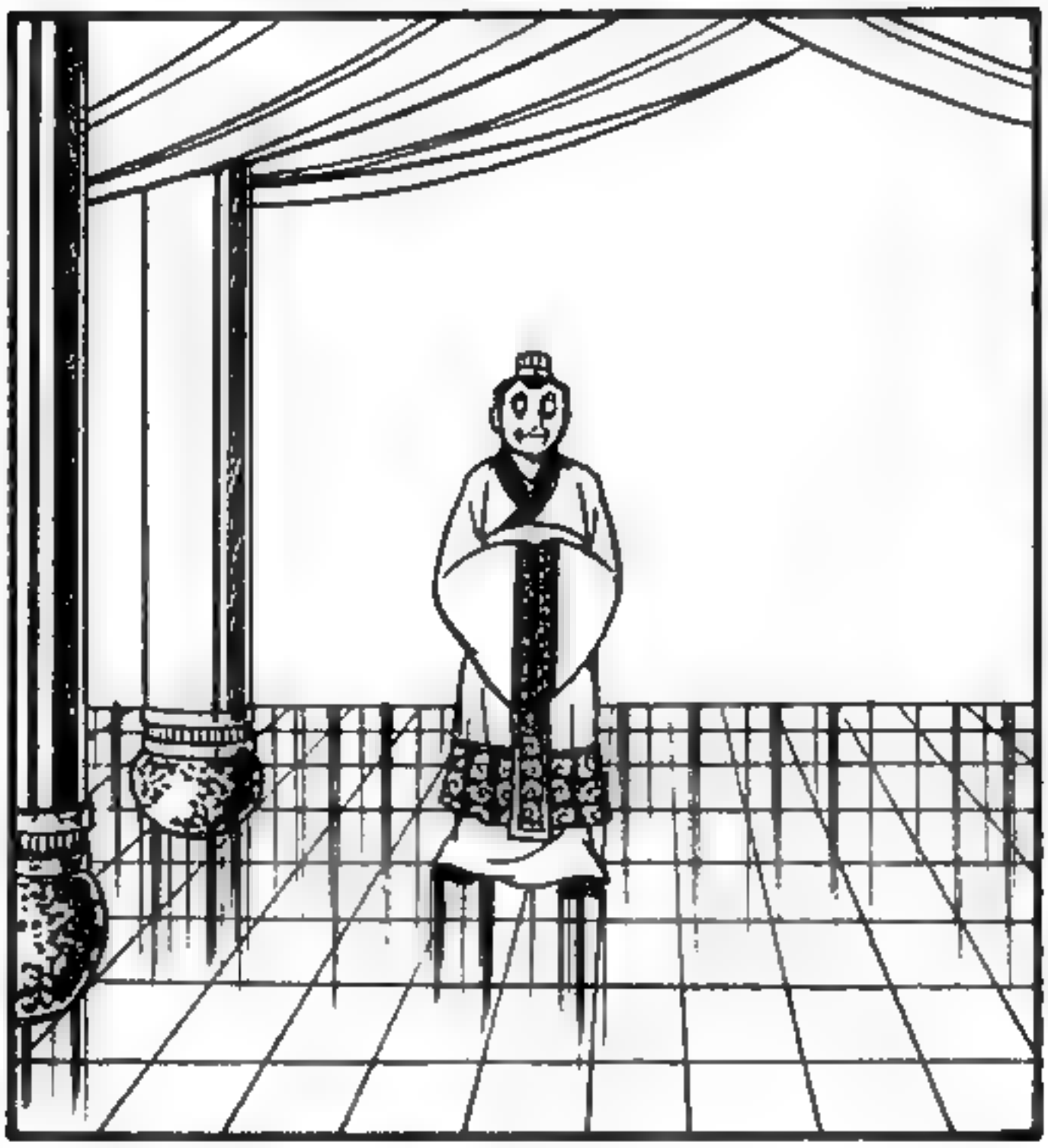
HMM...


THIS SHALL BE YOUR NEW RESIDENCE, MA'AM.
THESE SERVANTS WILL TEND TO YOUR EVERY NEED WHILE YOU ARE HERE.

PLEASE THINK OF ME, CHENG YU, AS YOUR OWN SON AND ASK FOR ANYTHING YOU MIGHT NEED.

FROM THEN ON, CHENG YU KINDLY TREATED HER AS IF SHE WERE HIS OWN MOTHER. HE WOULD OFTEN SEND HER GIFTS OF LUXURIOUS FOOD AND CLOTHING.


BECAUSE OF THESE GIFTS, XU SHU'S MOTHER OFTEN WROTE LETTERS OF THANKS TO CHENG YU






OH?
I'VE RECEIVED ANOTHER LETTER, CHANCELLOR.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I CAN MIMIC IT QUITE WELL.

I'VE NOW SEEN ENOUGH OF HER WRITING TO GRASP HER HANDWRITING STYLE.

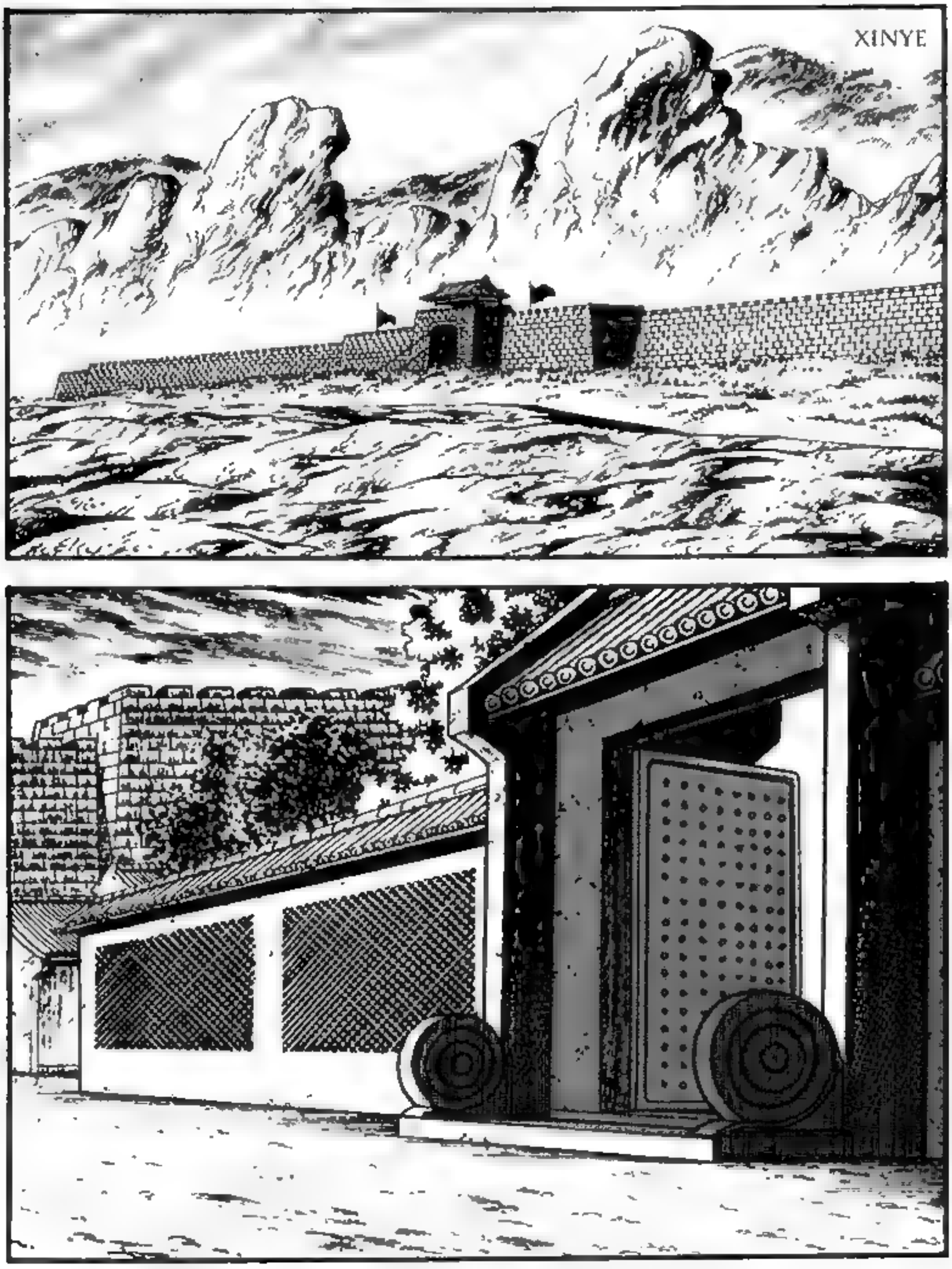
THIS IS THE LETTER.

YES, AN EXCELLENT PLAN.

I SHALL THUS MIMIC HER STYLE TO ASK XU SHU TO COME AT ONCE TO XUCHANG.

AND SO, CHENG YU DEFTLY WROTE A FAKE LETTER IN XU SHU'S MOTHER'S HANDWRITING

FAKE LETTER



IS THIS THE RESIDENCE OF A MAN NAMED SHAN FU?

A LETTER FROM MY MOTHER!?

I'M HERE TO DELIVER A LETTER FROM HIS MOTHER.

YES, BUT WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE MASTER?

I'M MERELY JUST THE DELIVERER SO I DO NOT KNOW...

DID ANYTHING HAPPEN TO MY MOTHER?

YES, THIS IS UNMISTAK-ABLY HER HANDWRITING.

HERE IS YOUR LETTER.

THANK YOU FOR THE DELIVERY.

I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE THEN.

SHU, HOW ARE YOU DOING THESE DAYS?

HE ACCUSED ME OF TREACHERY BECAUSE MY SON SERVES THE REBEL LIU BEI.

AS FOR ME, I AM IN GOOD HEALTH BUT THE DEATH OF YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER KANG HAS LEFT ME UNBEARABLY LONELY. NOT ONLY THAT, CHANCELLOR CAO CAO HAS CALLED ME TO THE CAPITAL.

MOTHER...

IF ONLY YOU'D COME HERE, CAO CAO SHALL PARDON US BOTH. SHU, PLEASE COME TO XUCHANG IF EVEN JUST A DAY EARLIER TO NOT ONLY SAVE MY LIFE BUT ALSO TO END MY HEART'S ACHING LONELINESS.

THANKS TO YOUR OLD FRIEND CHENG YU, MY LIFE HAS BEEN SPARED FOR THE TIME BEING BUT I AM NOT YET OUT OF THE CLEAR.

WHAT AN UNDUTFUL SON I HAVE BEEN!

I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SEE YOUR FACE, MUCH LESS EVEN APPROACH OUR HOME, EVER SINCE I BECAME AN OUTLAW.

I SHALL RETURN TO YOUR SIDE IMMEDIATELY, MOTHER.

IS LORD LIU AWAKE?

YES, SIR.

I HAVE COME TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU, MY LORD.

AH, SHAN FU. WHAT IS IT THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING?

I ORIGINALLY HAIL FROM YINGCHUAN AND MY REAL NAME IS XU SHU WHILE MY COURTESY NAME IS YUANZHI.

SHAN FU IS MERELY THE ALIAS I'VE USED EVER SINCE I BECAME HUNTED BY THE AUTHORITIES.

?

THAT IS, I WISH TO APOLOGIZE FOR HIDING MY TRUE IDENTITY FROM YOU UNTIL NOW.

AT FIRST, I CAME TO THESE REGIONS WITH THE INTENTION OF SERVING LIU BIAO. HOWEVER, WHEN I SAW WHAT KIND OF A RULER LIU BIAO WAS, I GAVE UP AND WENT TO MASTER SHUI JING FOR ADVICE.

I HAPPENED TO BE SPENDING THE NIGHT AT MASTER SHUI JING'S HOUSE ON THAT SAME NIGHT.

YOU KNEW?

AH, MIGHT YOU HAVE BEEN THAT GUEST OF HIS LATE AT NIGHT?

IN ANY CASE, MASTER SHUI JING TOLD ME THAT SIR WOULD MAKE A GOOD LORD TO SERVE. THAT IS WHY I SANG THAT SONG OUT ON THE STREETS. IT WAS SO I COULD PURPOSELY ATTRACT YOUR ATTENTION.

WAS THAT SO?

IT IS SAID THAT A TRUE MAN DIES FOR THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND HIM. AS SUCH, I FULLY INTENDED TO LOYALLY SERVE SIR UNTIL THE DAY I DIED.

DESPITE MY LIES, SIR HAS NOT ONLY PLACED FULL TRUST IN ME, BUT ALSO APPOINTED ME AS THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY.

I HAVE JUST RECEIVED THIS LETTER FROM MY DEAR MOTHER.

HOWEVER?

HOW-EVER...

AFTER READING THAT, I JUST CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO LEAVE MY POOR MOTHER ALONE ANY LONGER.

I BEG OF YOU, MY LORD. PLEASE RELEASE ME FROM YOUR SERVICE.

I AM SURE IT MUST BE PAINFULLY LONELY FOR HER TO LIVE WITHOUT ANY REAL RELATIVES NOR FRIENDS.

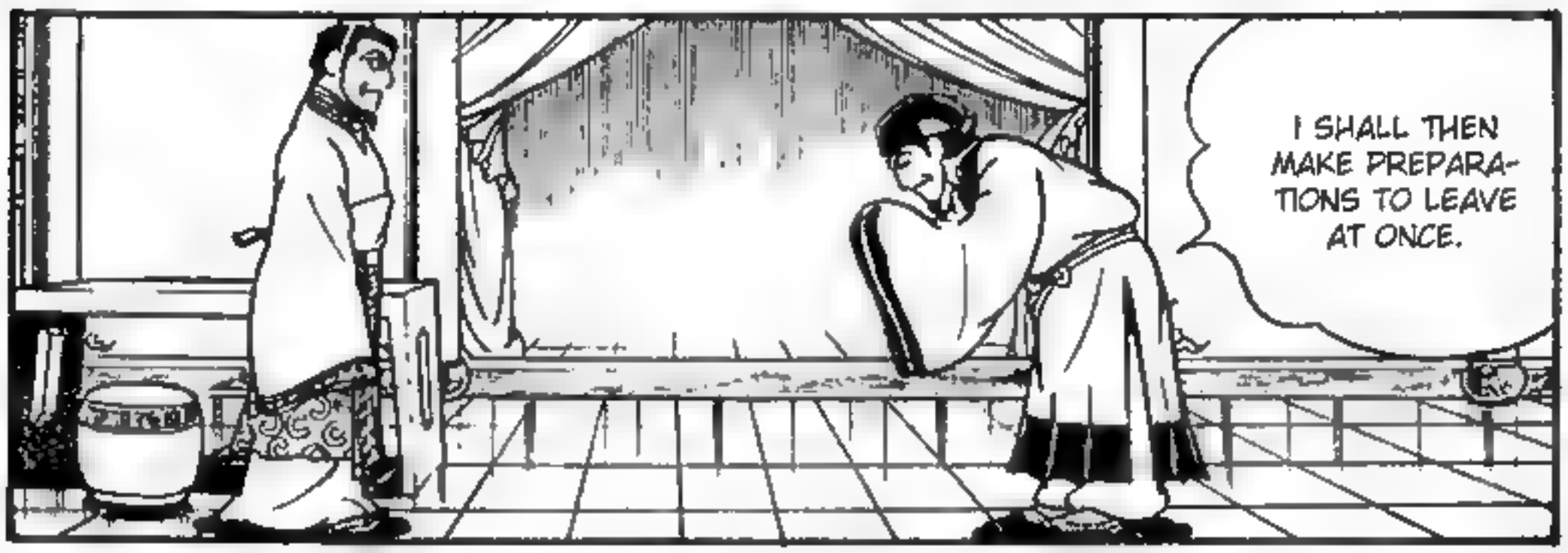
BUT IT IS MY ONLY WISH TO MAKE MY MOTHER HAPPY ONCE MORE.

PLEASE FORGIVE THIS SHAMELESS SELF FOR WALTZING IN HERE ONE DAY WANTING A POST, AND THEN DEMANDING TO BE LET GO THE NEXT DAY.

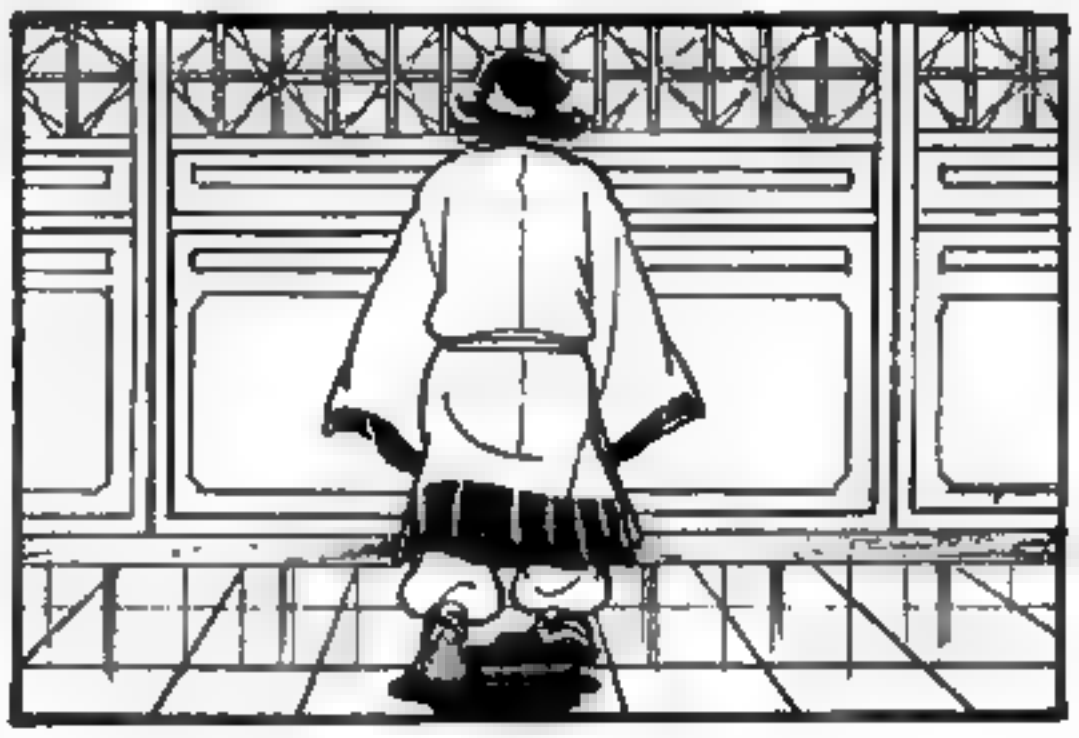

YES, BUT I HOPE YOU MAY COME TO MY SIDE AGAIN WHEN YOU BECOME MORE FREE.


THANK YOU, SIR.


I... I'M REALLY ALLOWED TO LEAVE...?
IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR A MOTHER TO LOVE HER CHILD AND A CHILD TO LOVE HIS MOTHER. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BREAKING THAT NATURAL ORDER. GO TO YOUR MOTHER AT ONCE.


I SHALL THEN MAKE PREPARATIONS TO LEAVE AT ONCE.





I MUST CONFESS MY OBJECTION TO THIS IDEA.

WHAT?

AH, SUN QIAN. SO YOU HEARD?

DOES MY LORD REALLY PLAN TO LET XU SHU GO?

XU SHU KNOWS EVERY-THING ABOUT XINYE'S DEFENSES AND OUR ARMY. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF CAO CAO WERE TO GET HIS HANDS ON SUCH INFORMATION?

HOWEVER, IF MY LORD DECIDES TO KEEP XU SHU HERE, CAO CAO WILL SURELY EXECUTE HIS MOTHER. IF THAT HAPPENS, XU SHU WILL WORK EVEN HARDER TO BRING DOWN CAO CAO FOR REVENGE.

ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT I ARRANGE FOR THE KILLING OF ONE OF MY SUBJECTS' MOTHER? IS THAT WHAT A RIGHTEOUS LORD DOES!?

SILENCE!

FORGIVE ME, MY LORD. MY THOUGHTS WERE LACKING.

EVEN IF IT MEANT MY OWN DOWNFALL, I SHALL NEVER COMMIT SUCH A HEINOUS ACT!

YES.

IT IS FINE AS LONG AS YOU UNDERSTAND. NOW LET US SEE OFF XU SHU ON A GOOD NOTE.


NO, NO. ALLOW ME TO SEE YOU OFF JUST A LITTLE FARTHER.
MY LORD, YOU HAVE ALREADY ACCOMPANIED TO THE CASTLE GATES. YOU HAVE DONE MORE THAN ENOUGH.


IS NOT THE DEBT TO ONE'S MOTHER DEEPER THAN THE OCEANS...?
IT SEEMS HUMANS TRULY ARE WEAK TO LOVE AND KINDNESS...




CAN'T WE GO JUST A LITTLE FARTHER?


MY LORD, I'M AFRAID I MUST ASK YOU TO RETURN NOW.

YES... I SUPPOSE WE MUST FINALLY PART WAYS.

A LITTLE MORE AND WE WOULD BE AT XUCHANG BEFORE WE KNOW IT.

THERE ARE MEN SMARTER THAN I WHO CAN BRING EVEN GREATER SUCCESS TO SIR.

MY LORD OVERESTI-MATES MY LOWLY WORTH.

FORGIVE MY STUBBORNNESS BUT IT IS TOO DIFFICULT TO LET SUCH A TALENTED MAN GO AWAY.

I THANK YOU GENTLEMEN AS WELL FOR SEEING ME OFF.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO SERVE LORD LIU TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITIES. I SHALL PRAY FOR YOUR SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE.

AND TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR MOTHER AS WELL.

TAKE CARE, XU SHU.

FARE-WELL.



'TIS A PITY...

I UNDERSTAND HOW MY LORD FEELS BUT I'M AFRAID WE MUST START HEADING BACK TO XINYE.

YES...

?

WAAIT!

WAAAAIT!

XU SHU!

IN THE TURMOIL OF MY FEELINGS, I FORGOT TO MENTION SOMETHING CRITICAL.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I SUGGEST SIR TO GO VISIT HIM.

20LI WEST FROM XIANGYANG LIES THE TOWN OF LONGZHONG, WHERE AN EXCEPTIONAL GENIUS LIVES.

?

NO, WAIT!

CONSIDER THAT ADVICE AS MY PARTING GIFT.

IT'S NOT SURPRIS-ING SIR HASN'T HEARD OF HIM. HE'S A SOLITARY TYPE THAT ONLY A FEW CLOSE FRIENDS KNOW.

I'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT ANY WISE SCHOLAR LIVING IN LONGZHONG. ARE YOU SURE HE'S THERE?

I HAPPEN TO BE ONE OF THOSE FEW CLOSE FRIENDS OF HIS.

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?

COMPARED TO ME? HAHA, I AM MERELY A DUCK WHILE HE IS A PHOENIX.

AND HOW DOES THIS MAN COMPARE TO YOU?

IF HE'S YOUR GOOD FRIEND, CAN'T YOU CONVINCE HIM TO COME TO XINYE?

WHAT!?

I SEE. AND WHAT IS THIS MAN'S NAME?

I'M AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. HE IS NOT THE TYPE TO CONDESCEND HIMSELF TO VISIT GO OUT OF HIS WAY AND VISIT A STRANGER. IT IS BEST THAT MY LORD GO VISIT HIM PERSONALLY.

FULO-NG!?

THE LOCAL VILLAGERS KNOW HIM BY HIS NICKNAME, FULONG.

HIS REAL NAME, HOWEVER, IS ZHUGE LIANG WHILE HIS COURTESY NAME IS KONGMING. HIS TALENT IS SECOND TO NONE IN ALL OF HAN.

SO THIS ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING IS ONE OF THOSE TWO MEN!?

MASTER SHUI JING ONCE SAID THAT OBTAINING EITHER FULONG OR FENGCHU ALONE WOULD BE ENOUGH TO RESTORE THE EMPIRE.

TO THINK THAT FULONG WOULD BE IN A PLACE LIKE THAT...!

YES, FULONG REFERS TO NONE OTHER THAN KONGMING.

NO, THAT WOULD BE PANG TONG WHO ALSO LIVES IN XIANGYANG. HIS COURTESY NAME IS SHIYUAN.

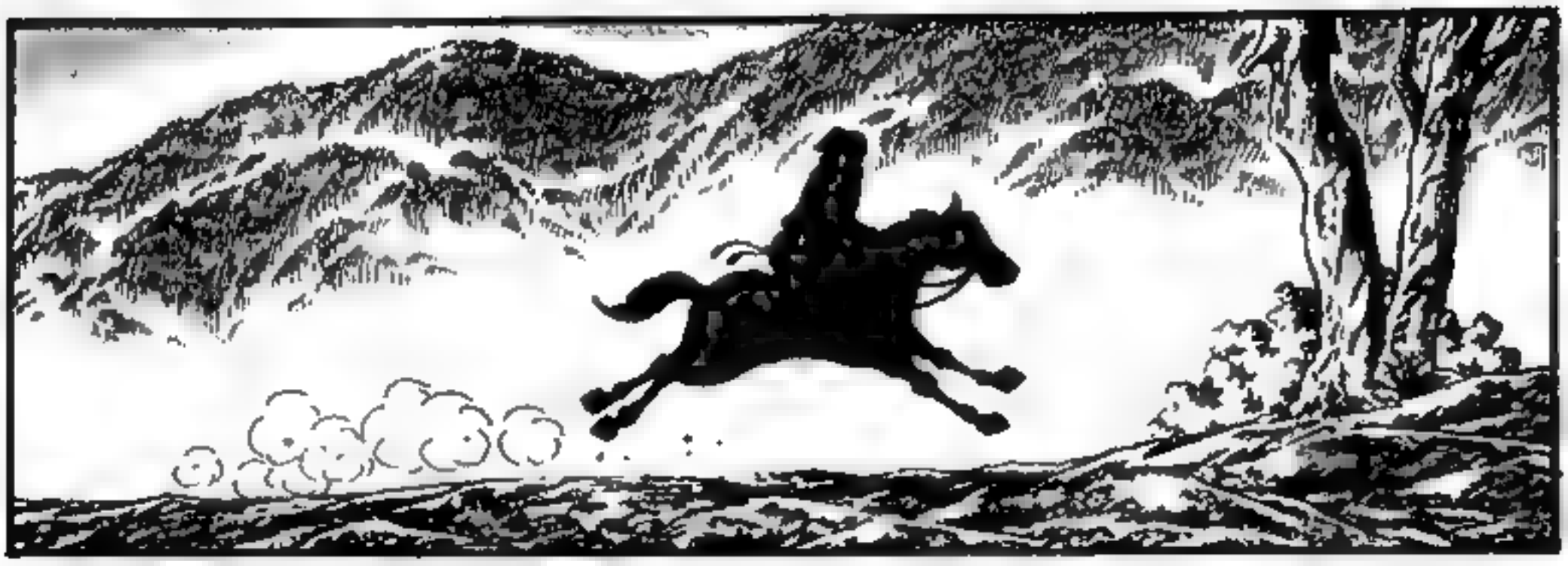
THEN ARE YOU THE ONE CALLED FENGCHU?

PLEASE GO VISIT KONGMING, MY LORD.

W-WHAT!? YOU MEAN TWO SAGES WERE LIVING RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE ALL ALONG?

Y-YES.

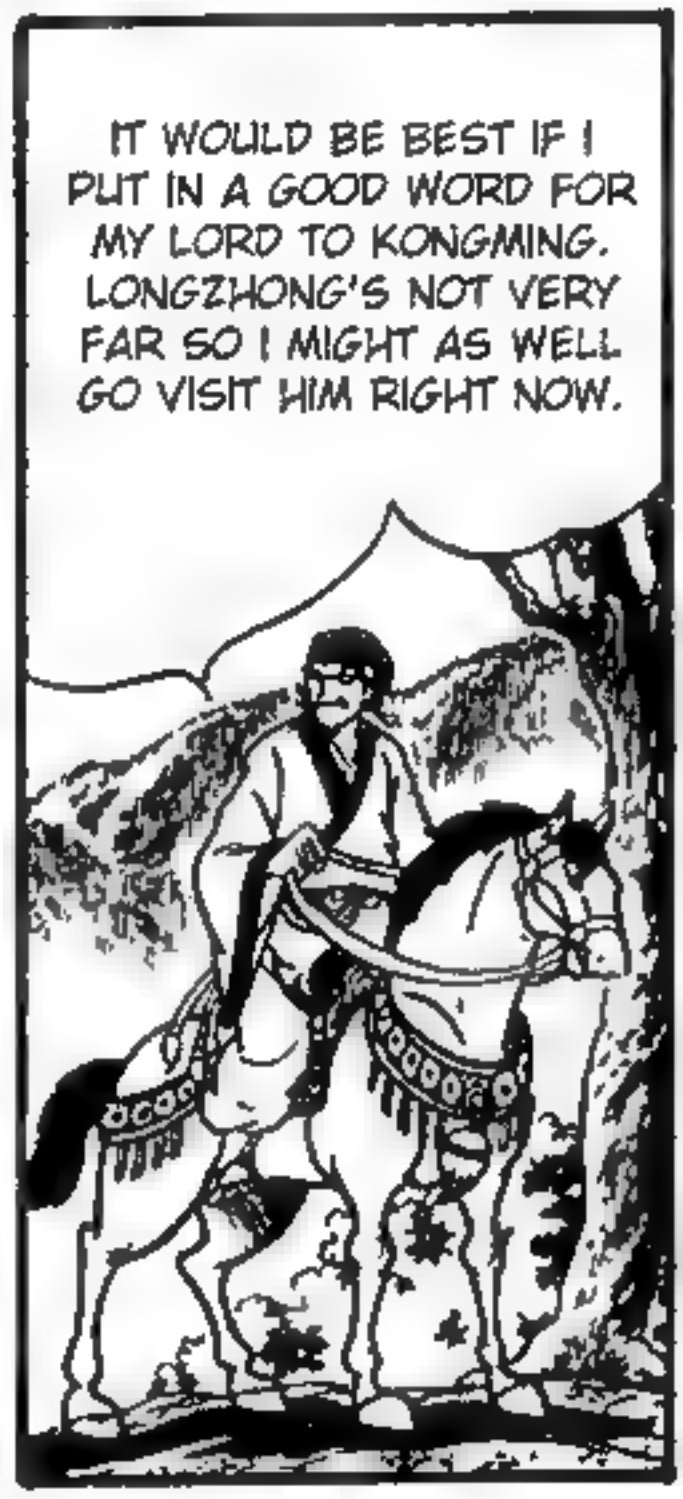
AND MAKE HIM SIR'S ALLY NO MATTER WHAT.



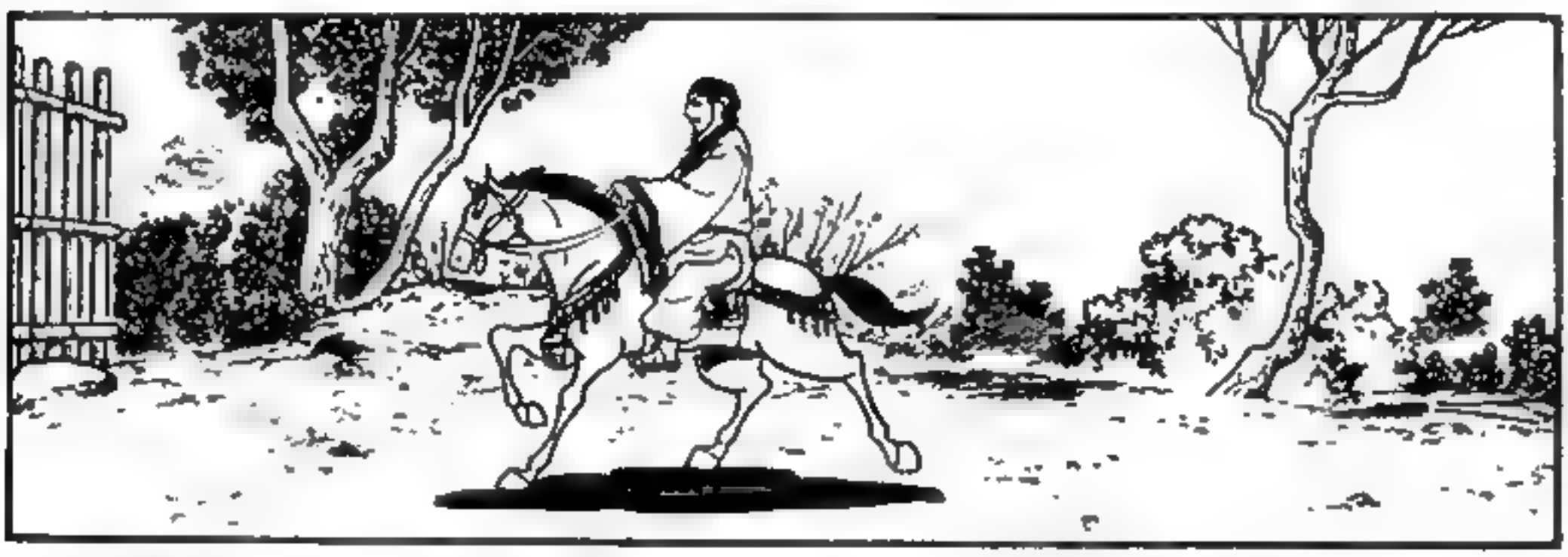

KONGMING'S NOT THE TYPE TO BE SO EASILY CONVINCED.


WAIT.


GIDDY UP!


IT WOULD BE BEST IF I PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR MY LORD TO KONGMING. LONGZHONG'S NOT VERY FAR SO I MIGHT AS WELL GO VISIT HIM RIGHT NOW.









MY MASTER IS IN HIS STUDY.

AH, GOOD.

AH, HELLO SIR YUANZHI.

IS KONGMING IN RIGHT NOW?

KONGMING, PARDON ME FOR THE SUDDEN VISIT.

I'VE ACTUALLY COME TO SAY GOODBYE.

HMM?

AH, WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, XU SHU?

I SEE... WELL, YOU BETTER GET GOING.

I HAVE BEEN RECENTLY SERVING LIU BEI WHEN I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MY MOTHER. SHE SAID THAT CAO CAO HAS ARRESTED HER AND THAT MY PRESENCE IS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY.

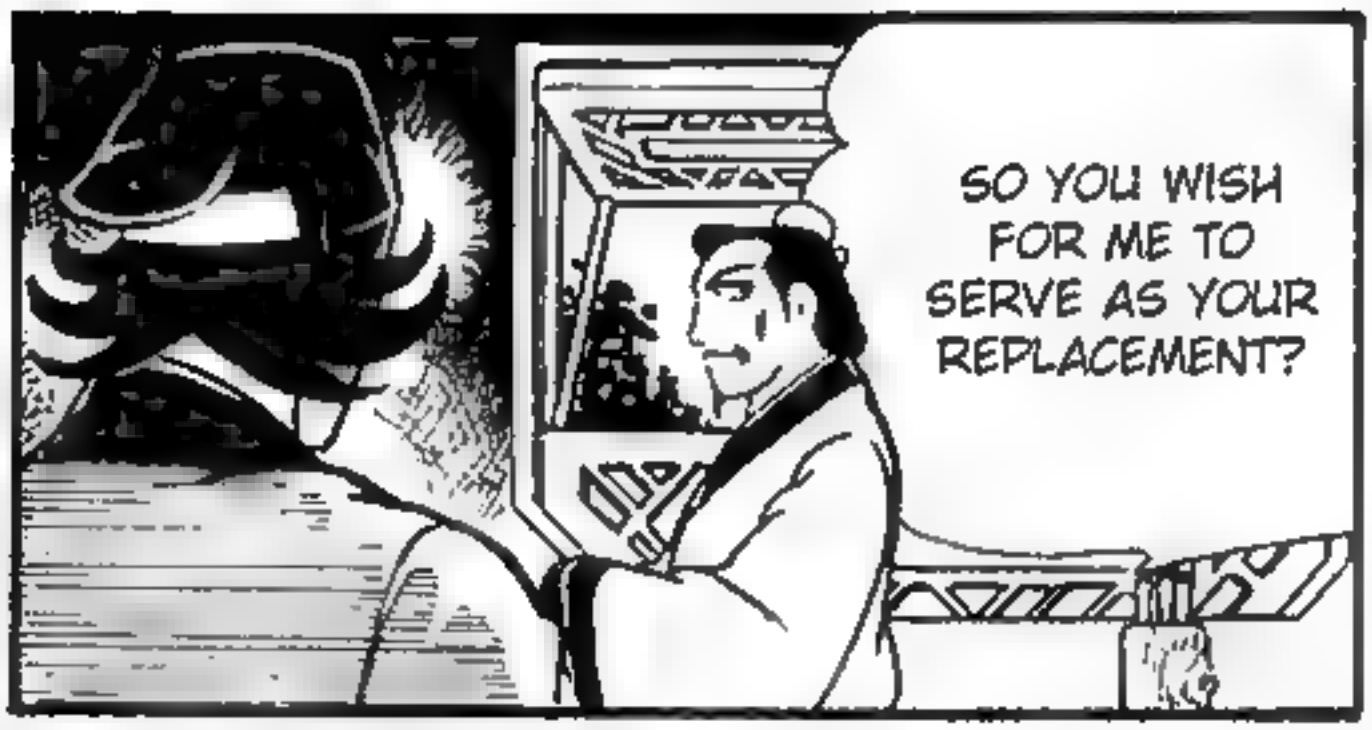
YES, RIGHT. THERE'S ACTUALLY ONE OTHER THING I WISHED TO MENTION.

GAINING A JOB OR POST CAN BE DONE ANYTIME, BUT THE TIME TO FULFILL OUR FILIAL DUTIES IS LIMITED.

I RECOMMENDED YOU TO MY LORD BEFORE I LEFT HIM.

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

AND SO I WAS HOPING YOU MIGHT GIVE MY LORD A FAVOURABLE ANSWER WHEN HE COMES TO ASK FOR YOUR SERVICE...

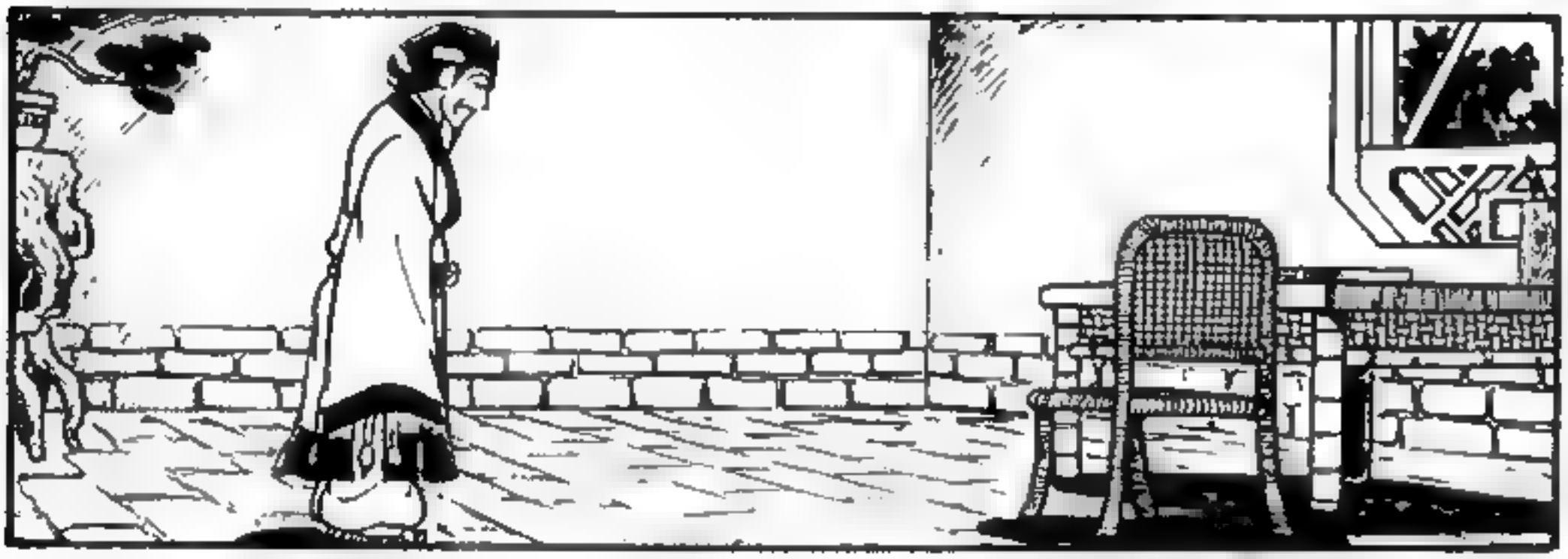

SO YOU WISH FOR ME TO SERVE AS YOUR REPLACEMENT?


D-DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?

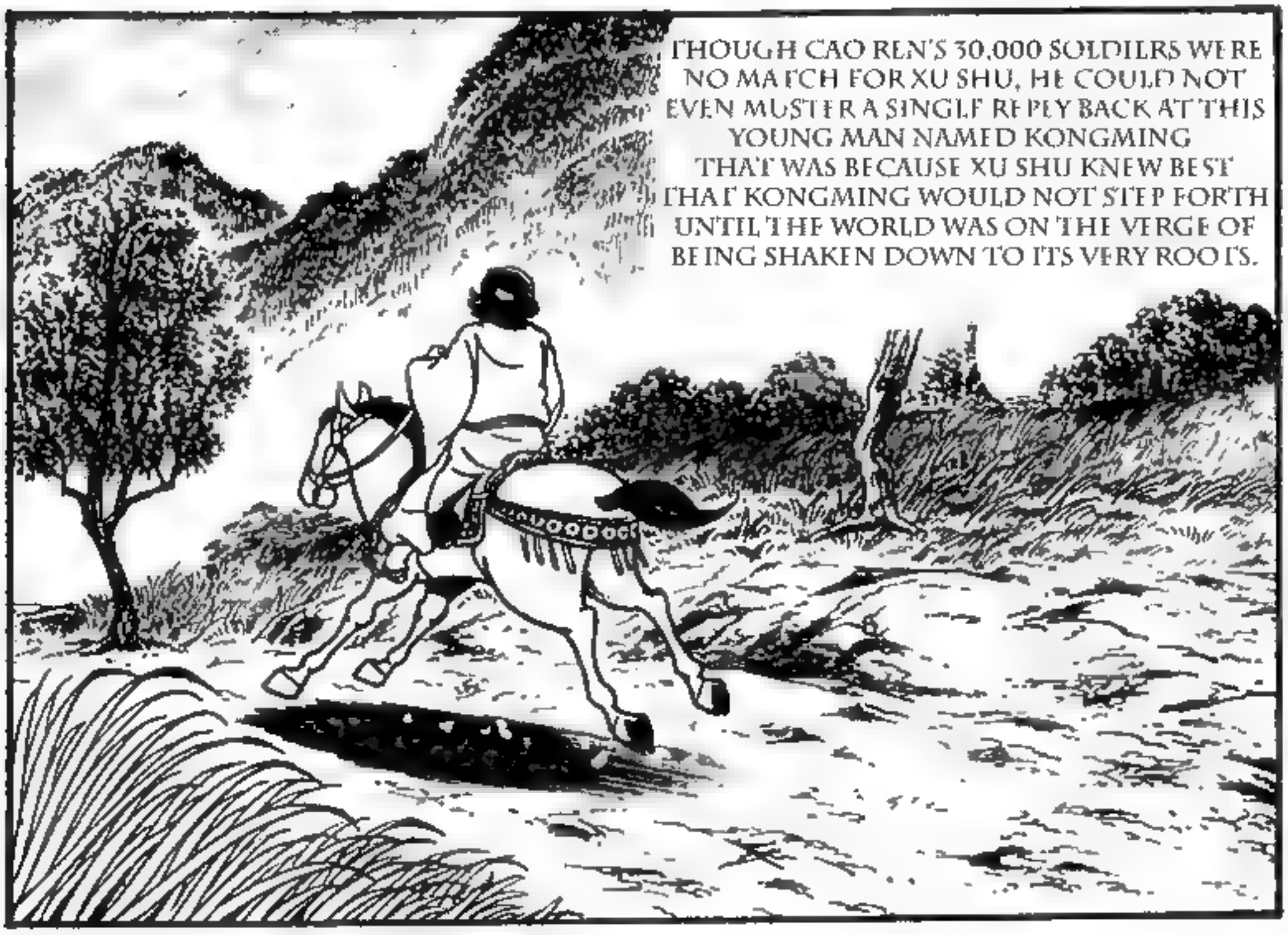

NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I...


DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD LEAP AT THE CHANCE OF A PROMISED POST AND SERVE WHOMEVER?



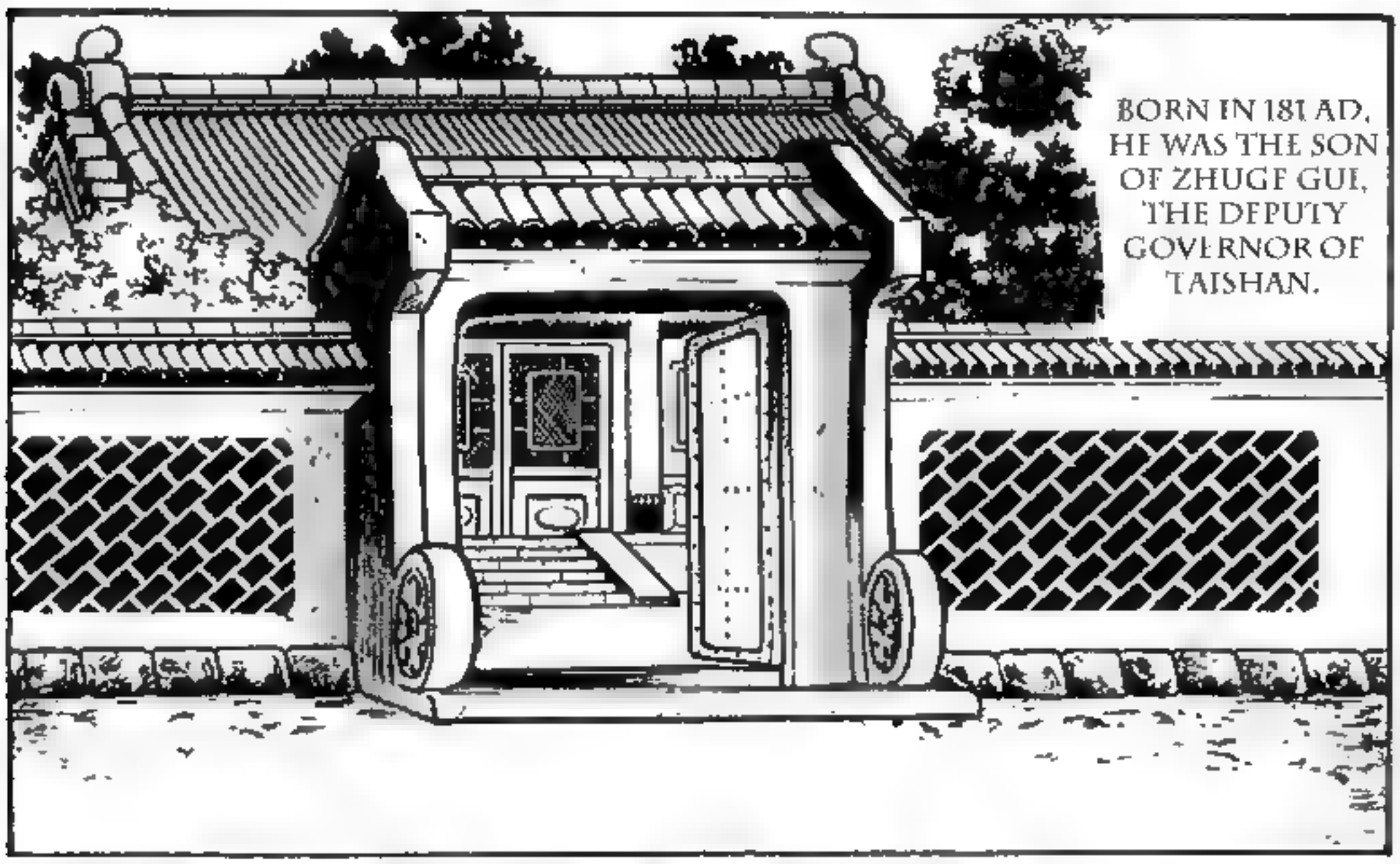



BUT I'M SURE THE DAY WILL COME WHEN WE'LL MAKE AMENDS.
YES.
ARE YOU LEAVING ALREADY, SIR?

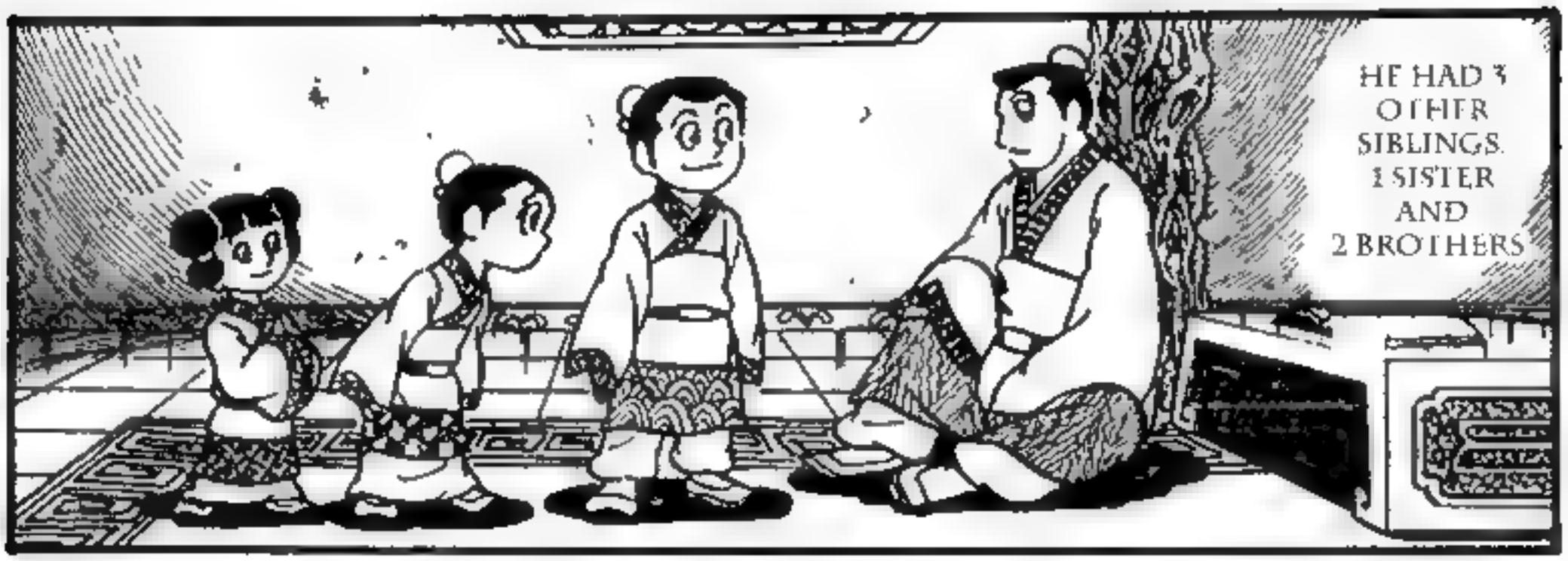

THOUGH CAO REN'S 30,000 SOLDIERS WERE NO MATCH FOR XU SHU, HE COULD NOT EVEN MUSTER A SINGLE REPLY BACK AT THIS YOUNG MAN NAMED KONGMING
THAT WAS BECAUSE XU SHU KNEW BEST THAT KONGMING WOULD NOT STEP FORTH UNTIL THE WORLD WAS ON THE VERGE OF BEING SHAKEN DOWN TO ITS VERY ROOTS.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING

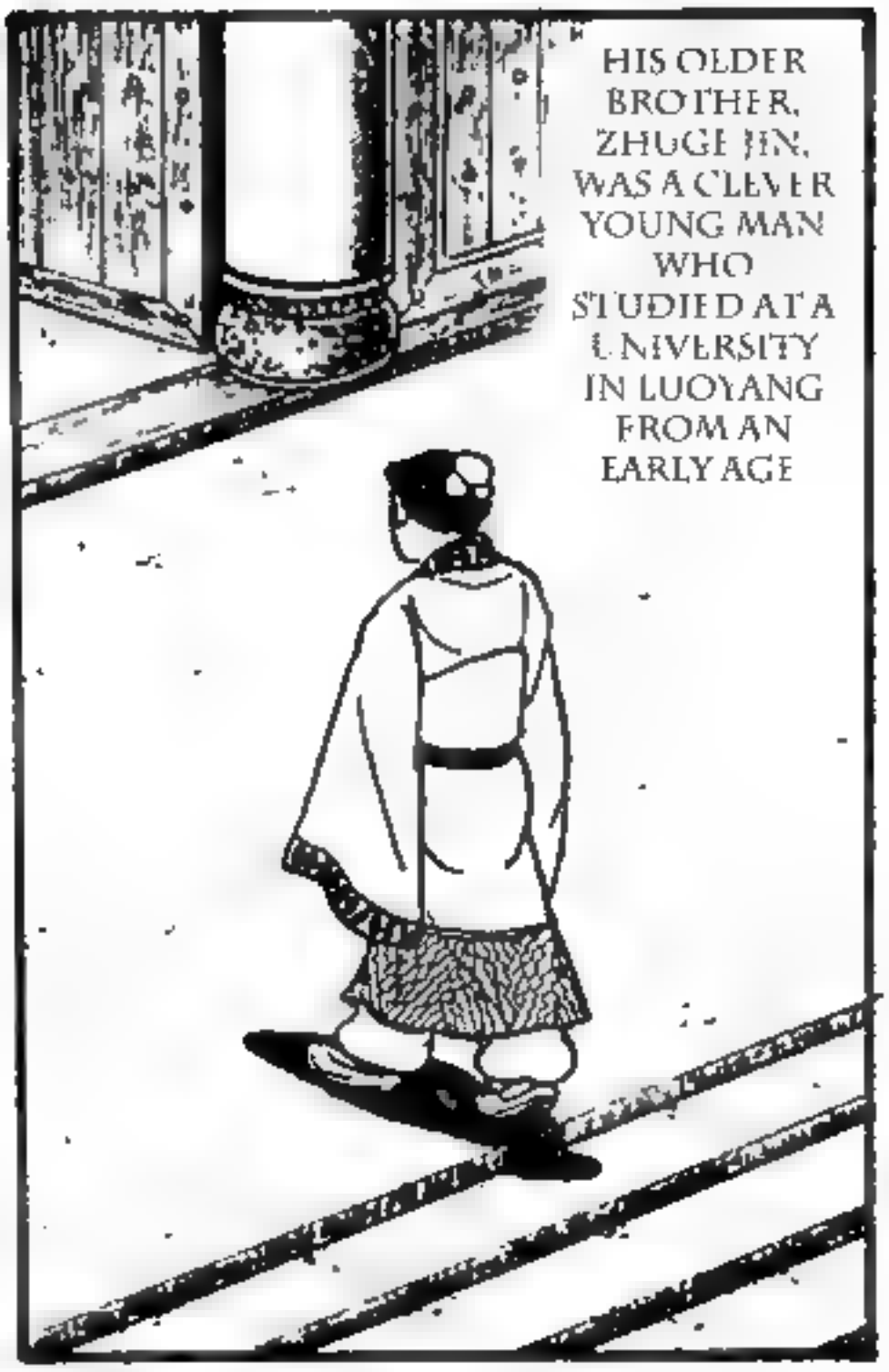


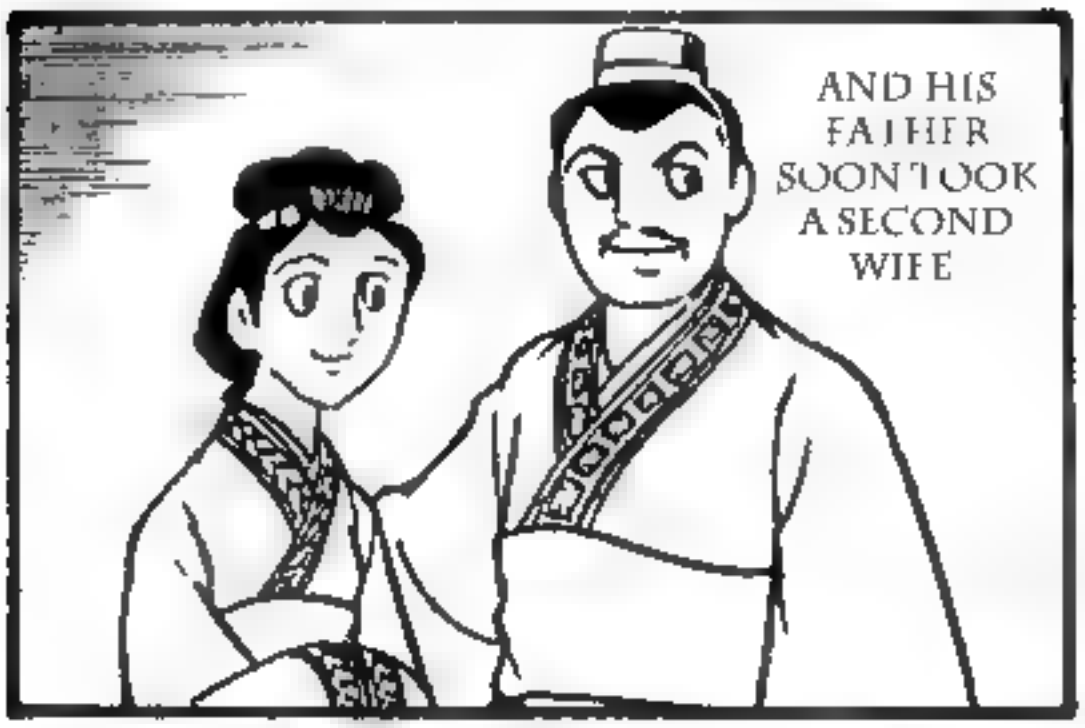


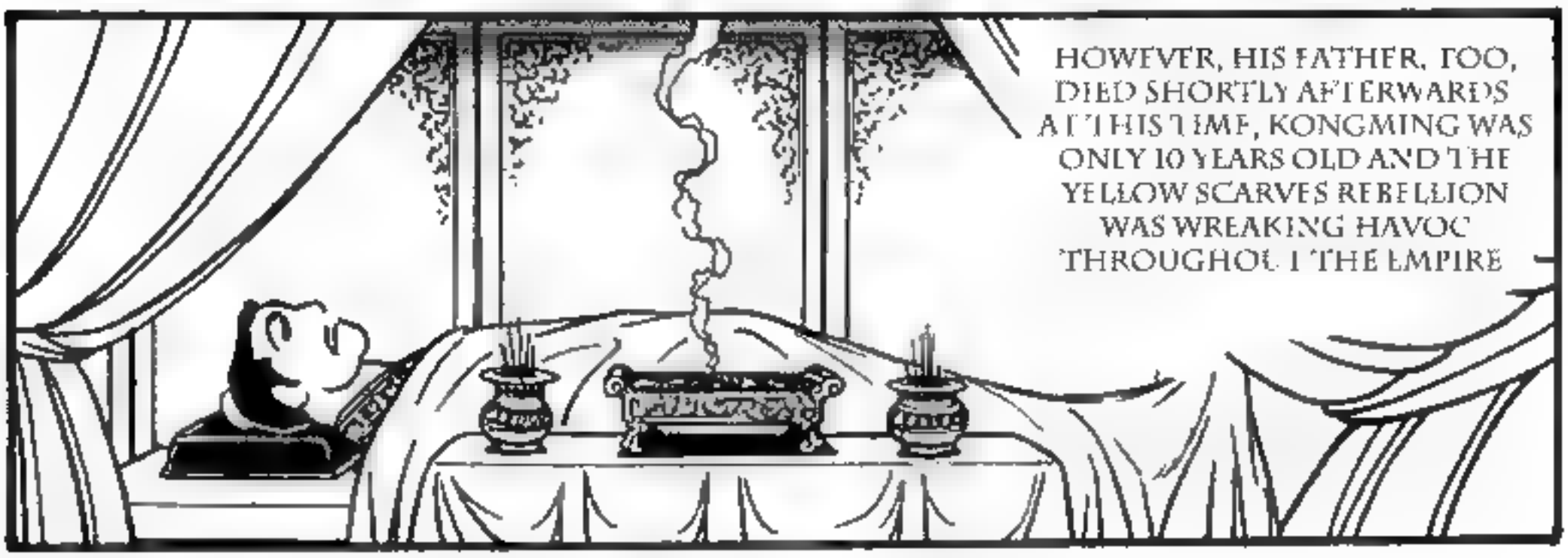



HE HAD 3 OTHER SIBLINGS. 1 SISTER AND 2 BROTHERS


KONGMING'S MOTHER PASSED AWAY WHILE HE WAS STILL YOUNG


HIS OLDER BROTHER, ZHUGE JIN, WAS A CLEVER YOUNG MAN WHO STUDIED AT A UNIVERSITY IN LUOYANG FROM AN EARLY AGE


AND HIS FATHER SOON TOOK A SECOND WIFE


HOWEVER, HIS FATHER, TOO, DIED SHORTLY AFTERWARDS
AT THIS TIME, KONGMING WAS ONLY 10 YEARS OLD AND THE YELLOW SCARVES REBELLION WAS WREAKING HAVOC THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

IT WAS DURING THIS TIME THAT THE ELDEST SON JIN RETURNED FROM LUOYANG

HIS STEP MOTHER HAD HER HANDS FULL IN TRYING TO RAISE HER STEP CHILDREN ALL ALONE.

JIN TOLD HIS FAMILY ABOUT THE ONGOING REBELLION AND HOW EVEN LUOYANG WAS NO LONGER SAFE

THUS, THE ZHUGE FAMILY DECIDED TO EVACUATE SOUTH TO YUZHANG TO LIVE WITH THEIR UNCLE

MANY OTHER PEOPLE WERE ALSO MOVING SOUTH FOR SAFETY DURING THIS TIME.

LOOKING AT THE OTHER REFUGEES, KONGMING WONDERED WHY THE MASSES HAD TO ENDURE SUCH PITIFUL LIVES

"IF ONLY THAT WERE SO, THE CORRUPT AND WICKED WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO AS THEY PLEASE..."

"IF ONLY A GREAT SAVIOUR COULD COME AND LEAD THE PEOPLE," HE THOUGHT.

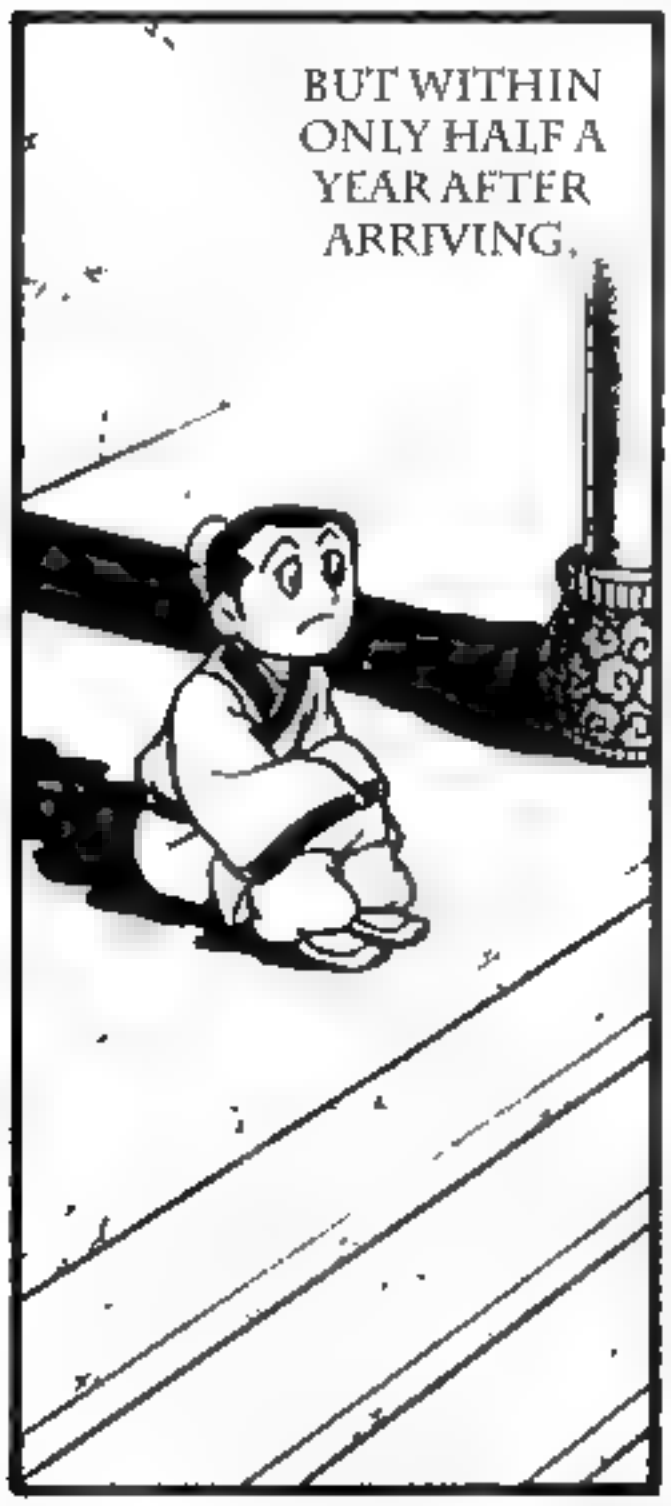

THE REFUGEES HAD TO ENDURE MANY HARDSHIPS ALONG THEIR JOURNEY

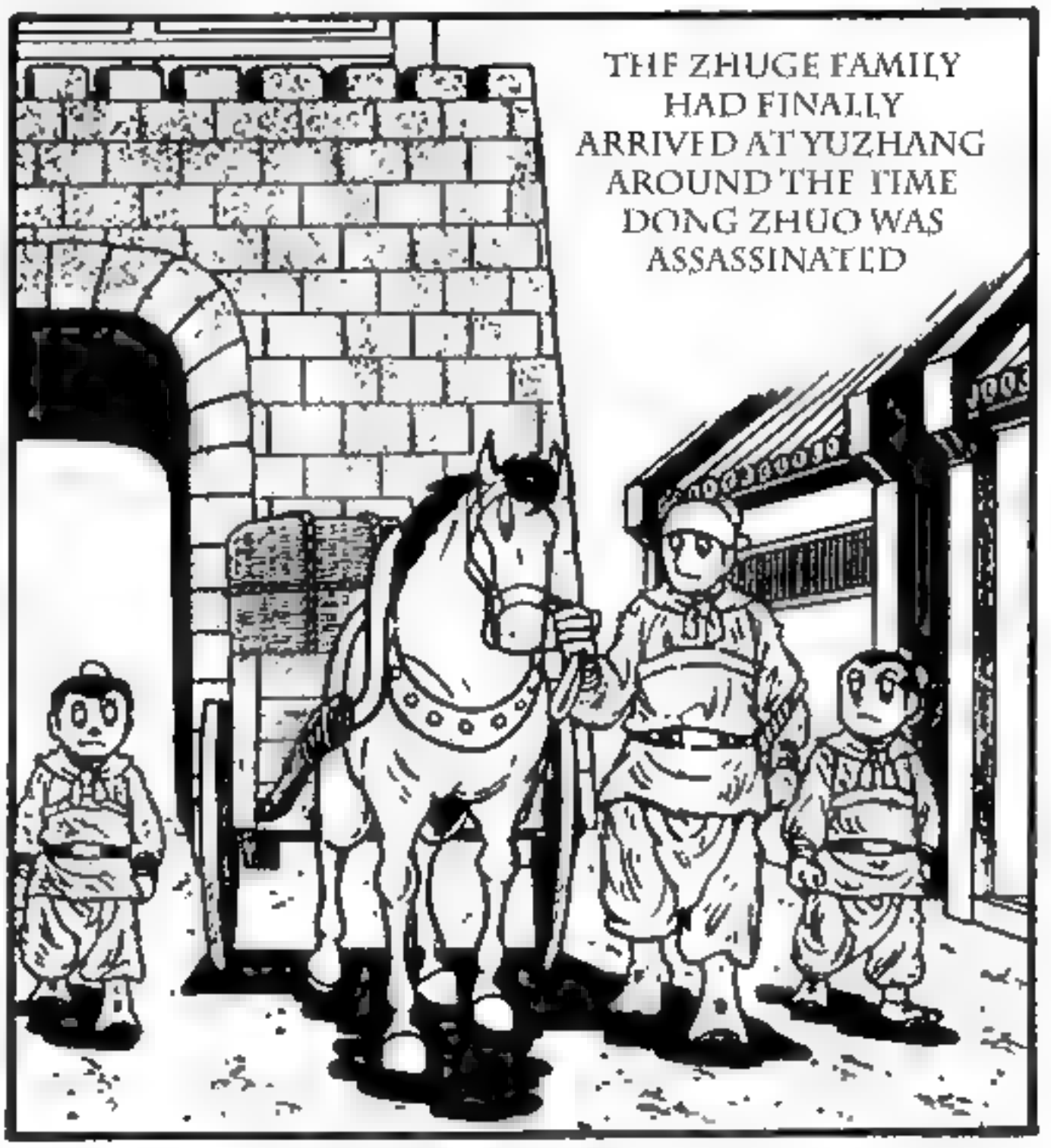

HUNGER, FATIGUE, NATURAL DISASTERS






IT WAS DURING THIS THAT KONGMING LEARNED HOW TO SURVIVE


BUT WITHIN ONLY HALF A YEAR AFTER ARRIVING,


THE ZHUGE FAMILY HAD FINALLY ARRIVED AT YUZHANG AROUND THE TIME DONG ZHUO WAS ASSASSINATED


HIS UNCLE ZHUGE XUAN, THEN THE GOVERNOR OF YUZHANG, WAS INVITED BY LIU BIAO TO COME TO JINGZHOU.

ZHUGE JIN PLANNED TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF UNDER THE RISING STAR, SUN CE OF WU.

HOWEVER, KONGMING'S OLDEST BROTHER ZHUGE JIN TOOK THEIR STEP MOTHER AND MOVED TO WU, NOT WANTING TO BURDEN HIS UNCLE ANY MORE

AND SO, ONLY KONGMING AND HIS 2 YOUNGER SIBLINGS ACCOMPANIED THEIR UNCLE TO JINGZHOU.

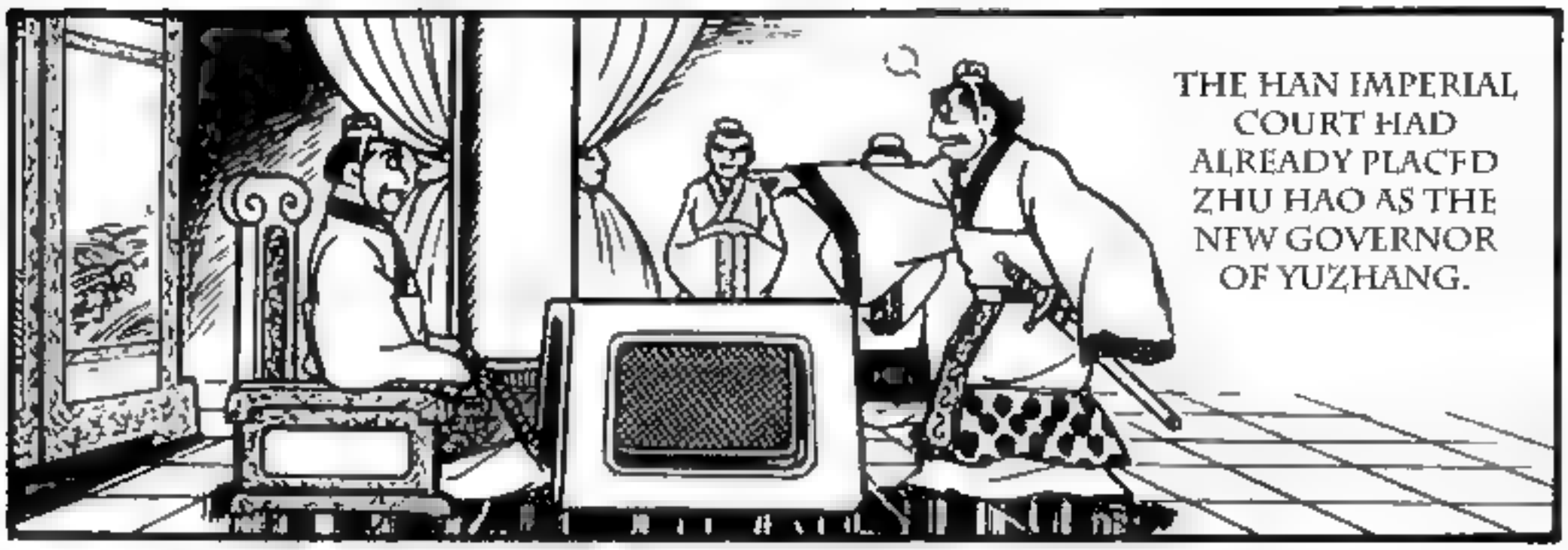
UPON ARRIVING, KONGMING WAS ASTOUNDED BY JINGZHOU'S PROSPEROUS CULTURE

BUT WHEN ZHUGE XUAN'S TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT AS YUZHANG'S GOVERNOR PASSED AWAY,

FOR A FULL YEAR, KONGMING AND HIS SIBLINGS LIVED WITHOUT WORRIES

ZHUGE XUAN RETURNED TO YUZHANG TO RESUME HIS POST AS GOVERNOR.

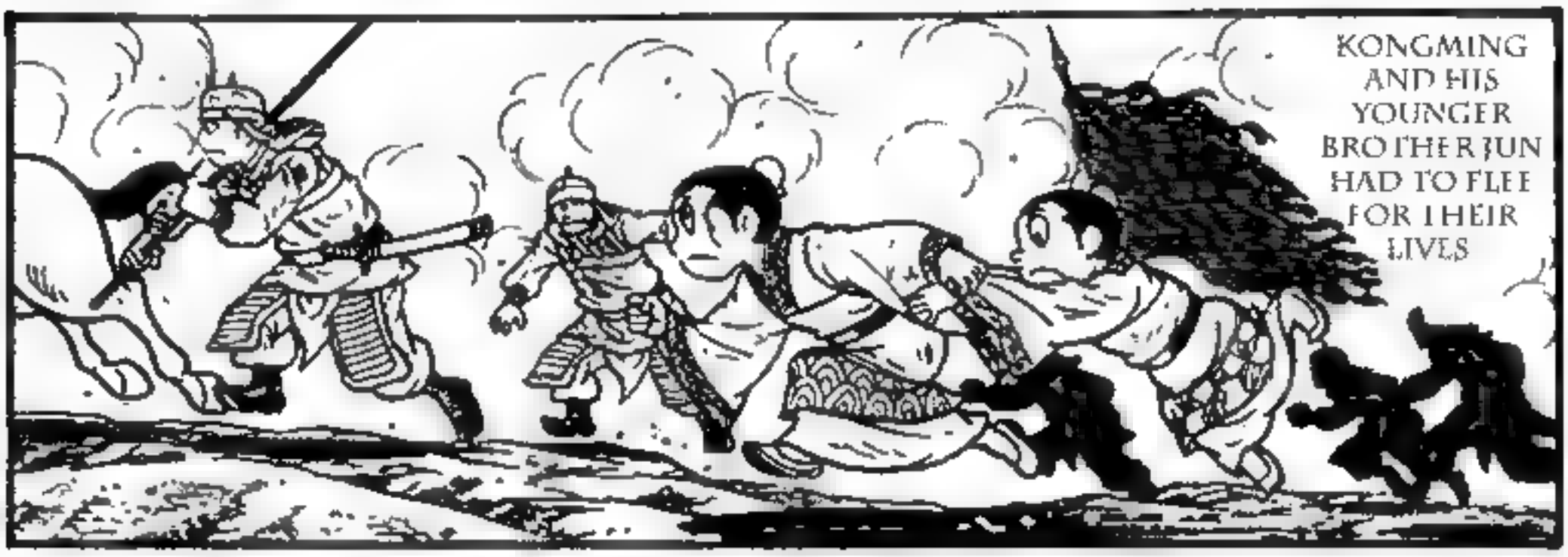
HOWEVER, THINGS REFUSED TO WORK OUT SO SIMPLY


THE HAN IMPERIAL COURT HAD ALREADY PLACED ZHU HAO AS THE NEW GOVERNOR OF YUZHANG.


NATURALLY, A FIGHT AROSE AS NEITHER SIDE WOULD YIELD THE POSITION OF GOVERNOR TO THE OTHER.
諸

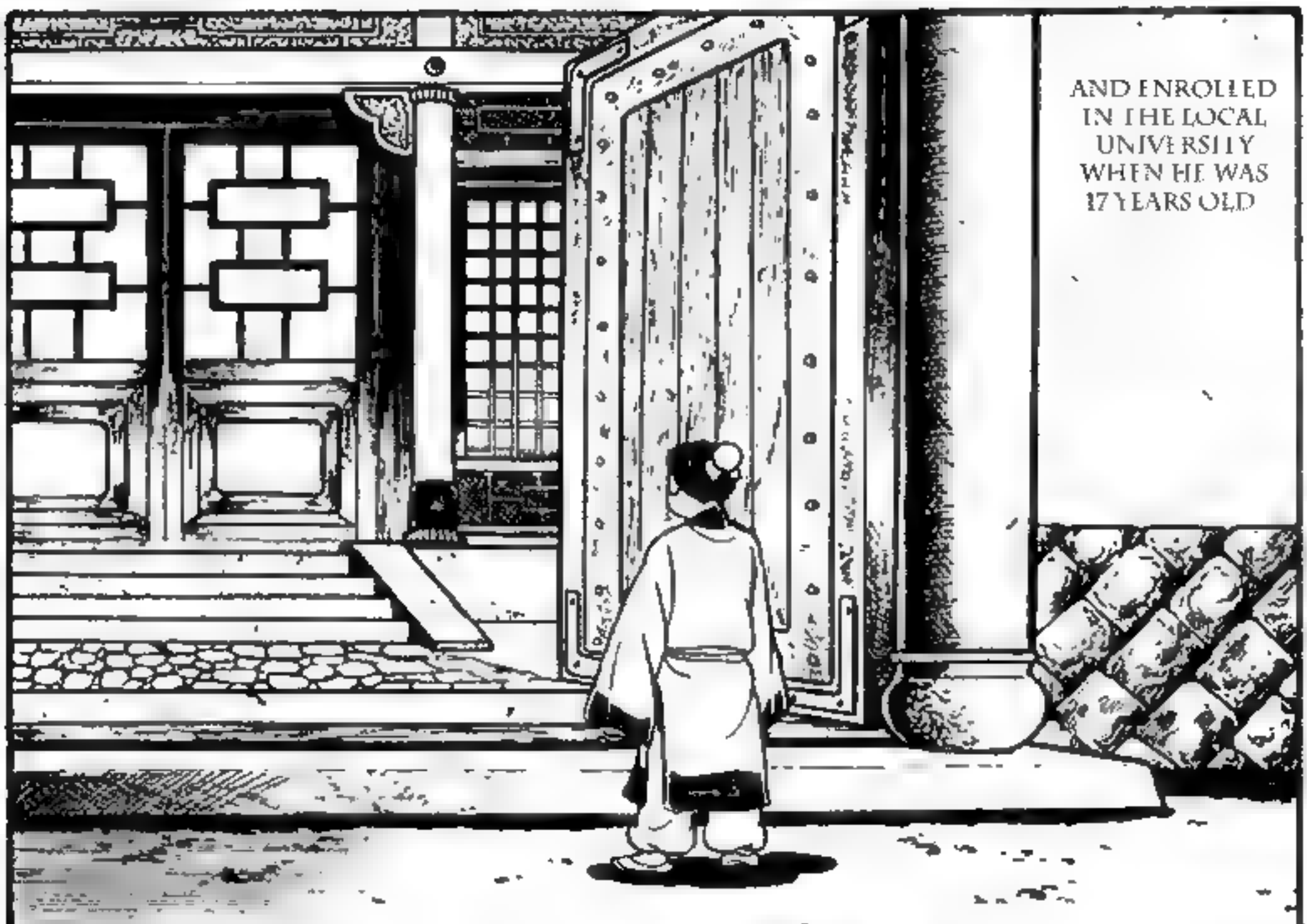

諸
UNFORTU-NATELY ZHUGE XUAN PERISHED IN THIS BATTLE


WITH HIS UNCLE AND AUNT NOW DEAD,


KONGMING AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER JUN HAD TO FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES


IT WAS FROM THIS THAT KONGMING LEARNED WHAT WAR TRULY WAS

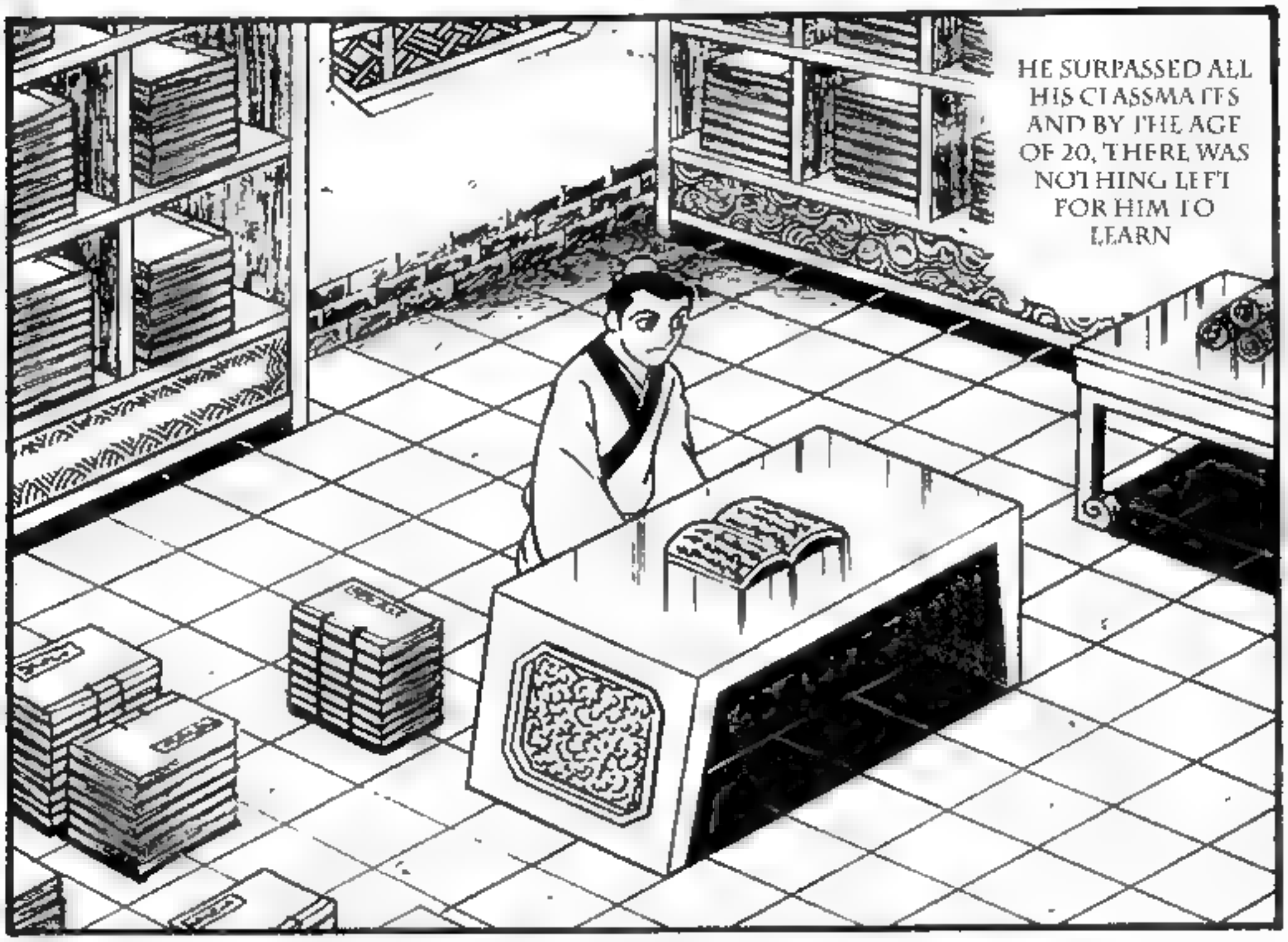

KONGMING RETURNED TO JINGZHOU AFTER WARDS,


AND ENROLLED IN THE LOCAL UNIVERSITY WHEN HE WAS 17 YEARS OLD


MANY BRIGHT MEN ACROSS THE LANDS HAD COME TO STUDY AT THIS UNIVERSITY AS WELL


IT WAS HERE THAT KONGMING'S GENIUS CAME TO LIGHT


XU SHU AND MENG JIAN WERE AMONG THOSE STUDENTS.

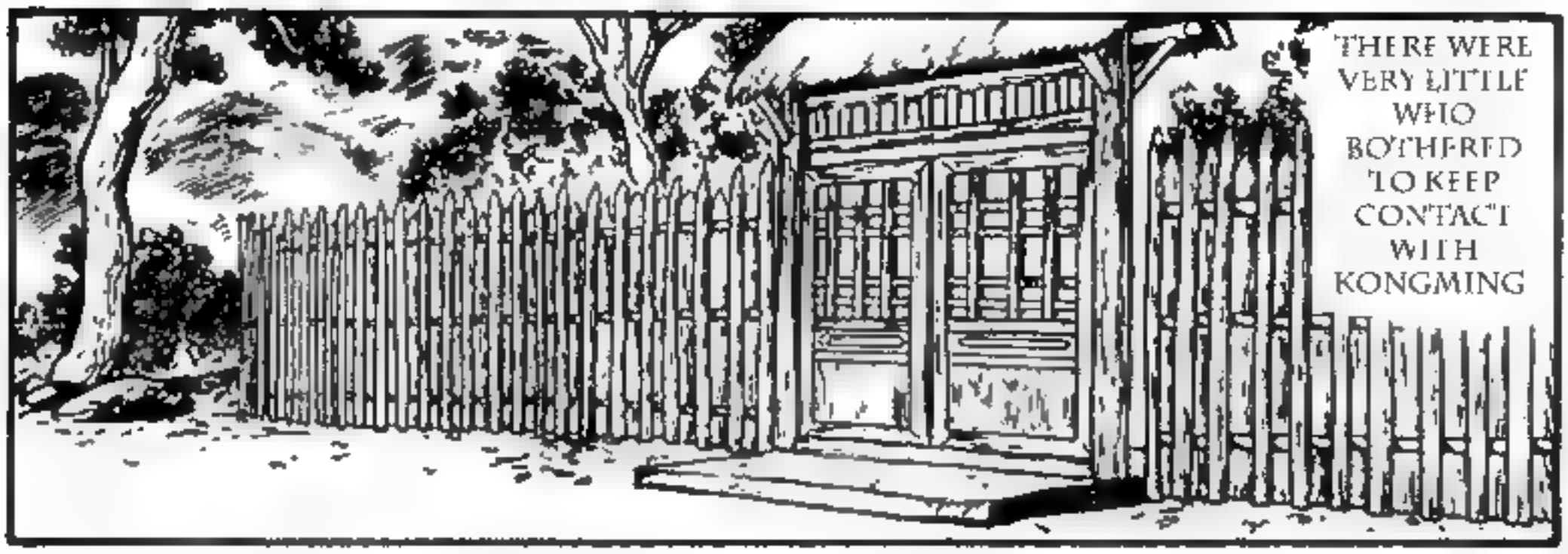

HE SURPASSED ALL HIS CLASSMATES AND BY THE AGE OF 20, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT FOR HIM TO LEARN


KONGMING THEN RETREATED TO THE REMOTE COUNTRYSIDES


KONGMING HAD DISLIKED HIS CLASSMATES WHO DID NOT KNOW HOW TO APPLY THEIR KNOWLEDGE FOR ANY GOOD USE.


HE DISMISSED THEM AS NARROW MINDED PEDANTIC MEN WHO STUDIED ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF STUDYING, AND ARGUED ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUING


HIS FELLOW CLASSMATES NATURALLY THOUGHT OF KONGMING AS AN ARROGANT AND PRETENTIOUS SHOW-OFF.


THERE WERE VERY LITTLE WHO BOTHERED TO KEEP CONTACT WITH KONGMING


BUT THE FEW WHO DID KEEP IN TOUCH REALIZED THE EXTENT OF KONGMING'S GENIUS AND ADMIRED HIM DEEPLY.


ONE DAY, WHILE CHATTING AMONGST THESE FRIENDS, THE FOLLOWING WAS SAID TO HAVE OCCURRED.

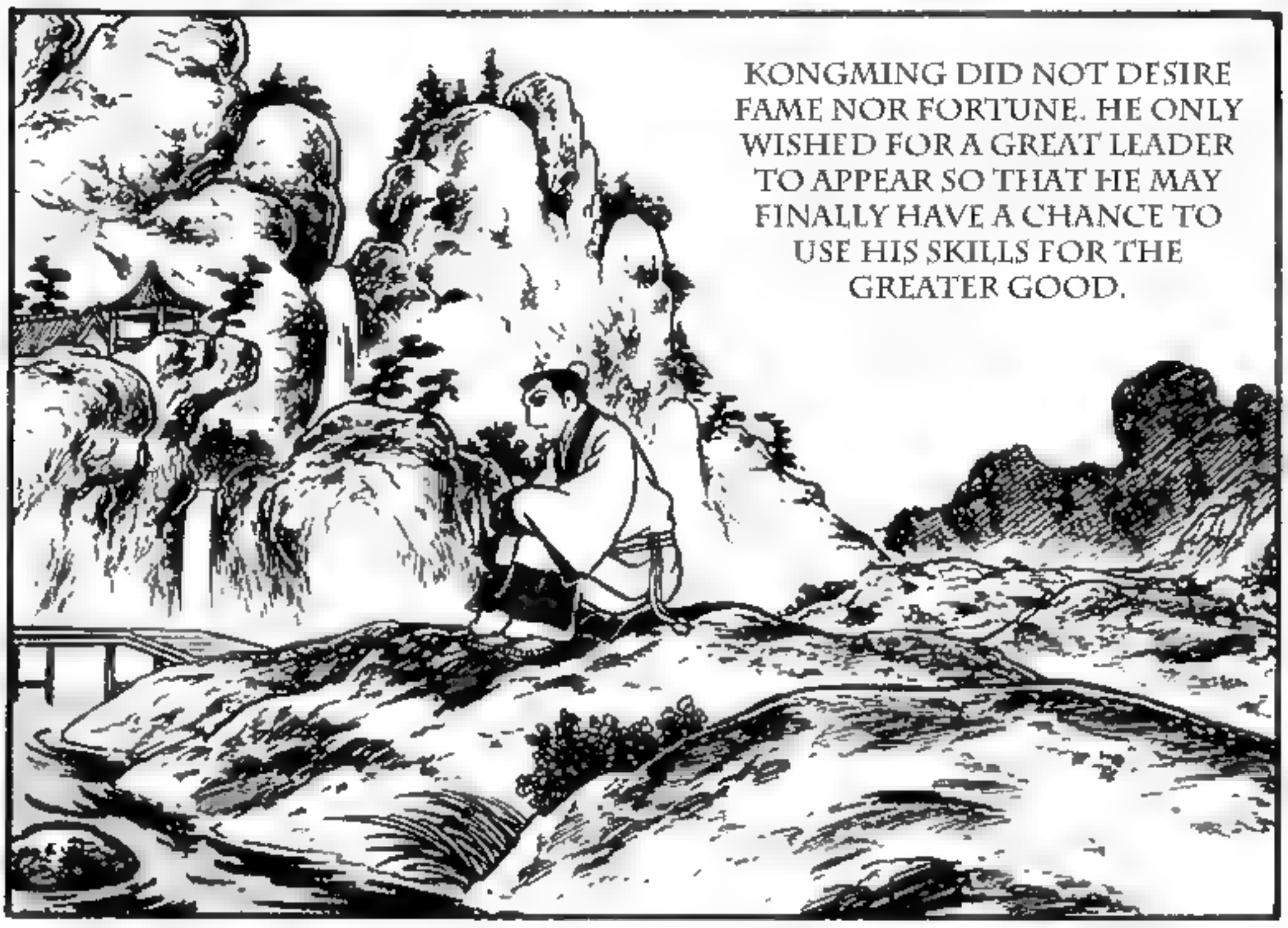

HMM... PERHAPS A GOVERNOR OR DEPUTY GOVERNOR?


KONGMING, HOW FAR DO YOU THINK I'LL GET IN LIFE?




THEN WHAT ABOUT YOU?


BUT KONGMING ONLY REPLIED BACK WITH A SILENT SMILE


KONGMING DID NOT DESIRE FAME NOR FORTUNE. HE ONLY WISHED FOR A GREAT LEADER TO APPEAR SO THAT HE MAY FINALLY HAVE A CHANCE TO USE HIS SKILLS FOR THE GREATER GOOD.


THE IMAGES OF THOSE STARVING REFUGEES WERE STILL AS VIVID AS EVER IN KONGMING'S MIND.


HE WANTED TO CHANGE THE WORLD SO THAT THE PEOPLE NEED NOT SUFFER SUCH FATES BUT IN ORDER TO DO SO, HE NEEDED TO FIND A GREAT LEADER TO SERVE.


THAT IS WHY HE COULD NOT HELP BUT BE IRRITATED WHEN XU SHU TRIED TO FORCIBLY PUSH HIM INTO A POST.
KONGMING HAD BEEN PATIENTLY WAITING FOR SUCH AN INDIVIDUAL WHILE HE SPENT HIS DAYS IN THE REMOTE COUNTRYSIDES

MOTHER AND SON




LET HIM THROUGH.


YES, SIR.


YES, SIR.
XU SHU HAS ARRIVED?


THANK YOU, MY LORD.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR PLAN WORKED SPLENDIDLY, CHENG YU.



YES, THANK YOU FOR COMING. PLEASE, COME A LITTLE CLOSER.

HELLO CHANCELLOR, I AM XU SHU YUANZHI.

CHENG YU WILL LEAD YOU TO HER HOME IN XUCHANG.

AND WHERE EXACTLY MIGHT SHE BE?

CHENG YU HERE HAS BEEN TAKING GOOD CARE OF YOUR MOTHER.

YES, SIR.

IN ANY CASE, I HOPE THAT YOU SHALL FULFILL YOUR FILIAL DUTIES WHILE YOU LIVE HERE IN XUCHANG AND WORK UNDER ME.

ALLOW ME TO LEAD THE WAY.

THANK YOU.

THIS IS HER HOME. I'M SURE SHE'LL BE VERY HAPPY TO FINALLY SEE YOU.




YUANZHI!


MOTHER!


I MISSED YOU SO DEARLY.


WHAT?
SO DID I BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I HAD HEARD THAT YOU WERE IN XINYE SERVING LIU BEI...

用時方恨少

MY CHILD, YOU'RE ALREADY A GROWN MAN IN YOUR THIRTIES. DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU'RE STILL SO DENSE AS TO THINK THAT I WOULD EVER WRITE A LETTER LIKE THAT.

I CAME AT ONCE AFTER RECEIVING YOUR LETTER ABOUT HOW LONELY YOU WERE. ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS?

WHA!?

MY CHILD, YOU HAVE STUDIED FROM AN EARLY AGE AND EXPERIENCED INNUMERABLE THINGS WHILE TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT THESE LANDS. YET DESPITE THAT, YOU ARE STILL SO GULLIBLE ENOUGH TO ABANDON YOUR PRECIOUS LORD ALL BECAUSE OF A SIMPLE FAKE LETTER!?

BUT ISN'T THIS YOUR WRITING ..?

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERNS FOR ME, BUT LOYALTY TO ONE'S LORD SHOULD BE UPHELD ABOVE ALL. AS A SCHOLAR, YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER!

T-THIS WAS A FAKE...!?

HOW COULD YOU BE SO FOOLISH...

IF ONLY I WEREN'T ALIVE, THIS WOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED...!

NOT ONLY THAT, LIU BEI IS A MOST EXCELLENT LORD BELOVED BY THE PEOPLE. I WAS OVERJOYED TO HEAR THAT MY SON WAS SERVING SUCH A MAN BUT TO THINK YOU WOULD ABANDON HIM FOR THE WICKED CAO CAO...

MOTHER!

I HAVE NO RIGHT TO FACE YOU, MOTHER.


SIR, YOUR MOTHER...!


?
AGHHHHHH!


AH!

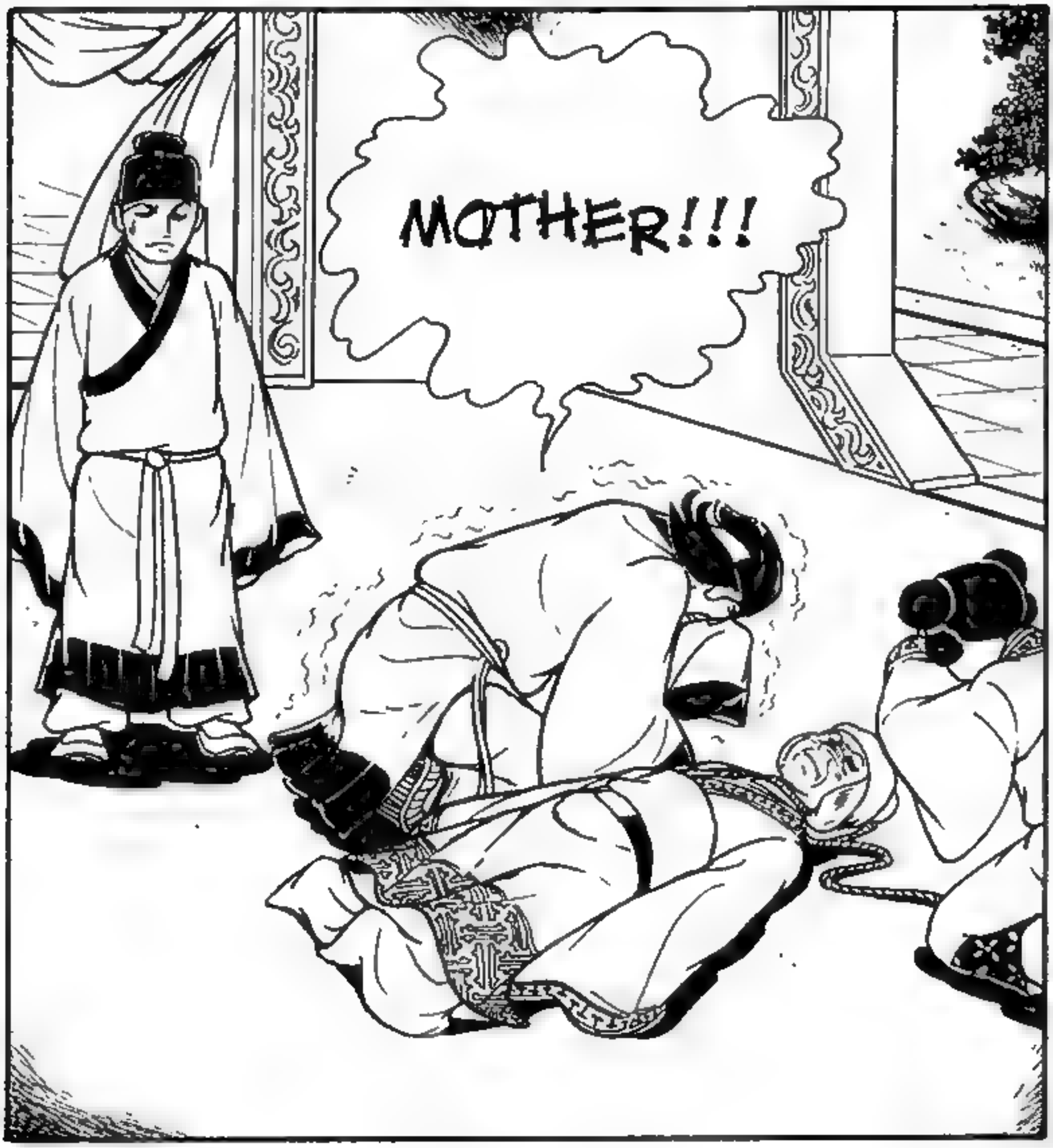


MOTHER!

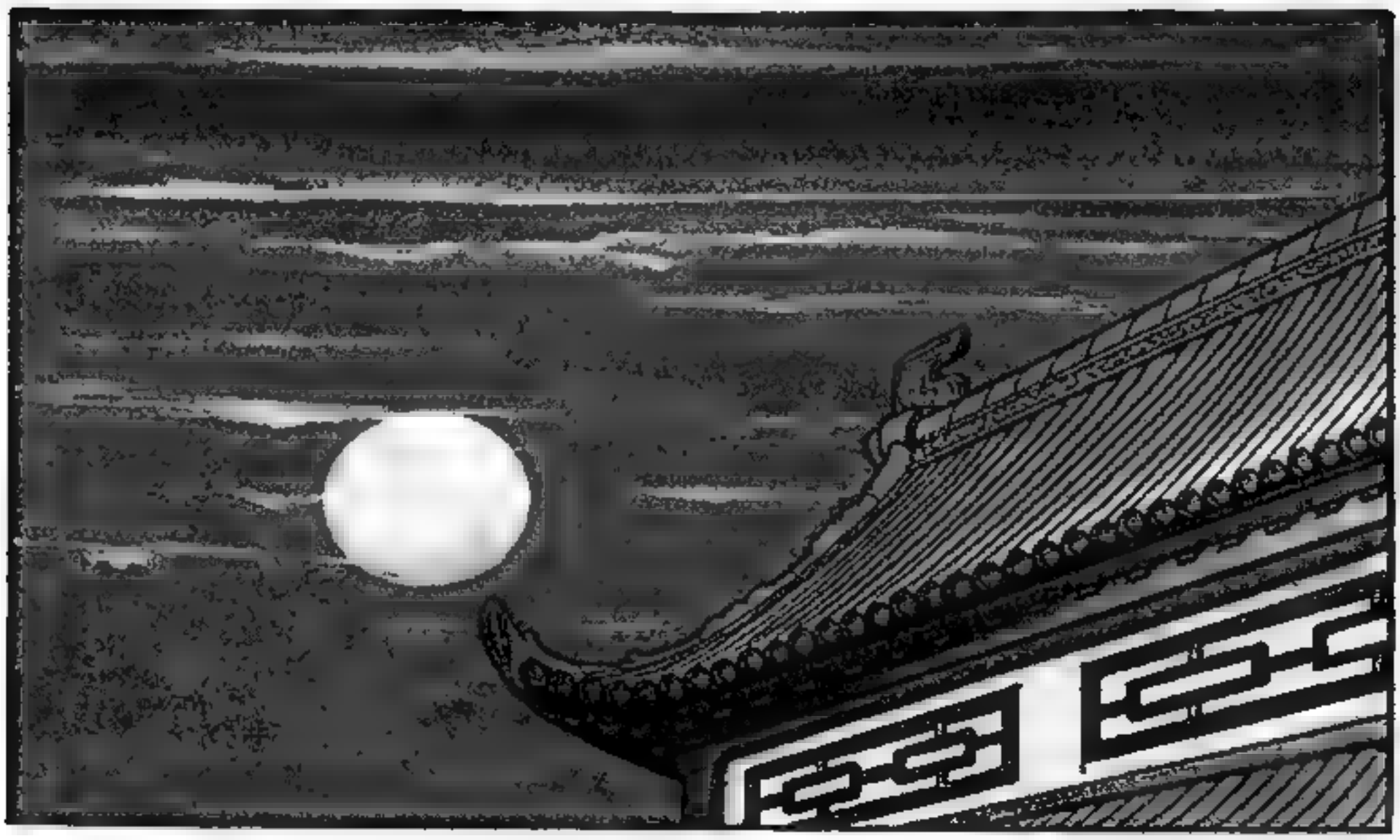

MOTHER!


MA...


BUT THERE WAS NO REPLY FROM XU SHU'S MOTHER.


MOTHER!!!

VISITING KONGMING





YOU THERE, CAN YOU TELL ME IF LIU BEI IS IN RIGHT NOW?

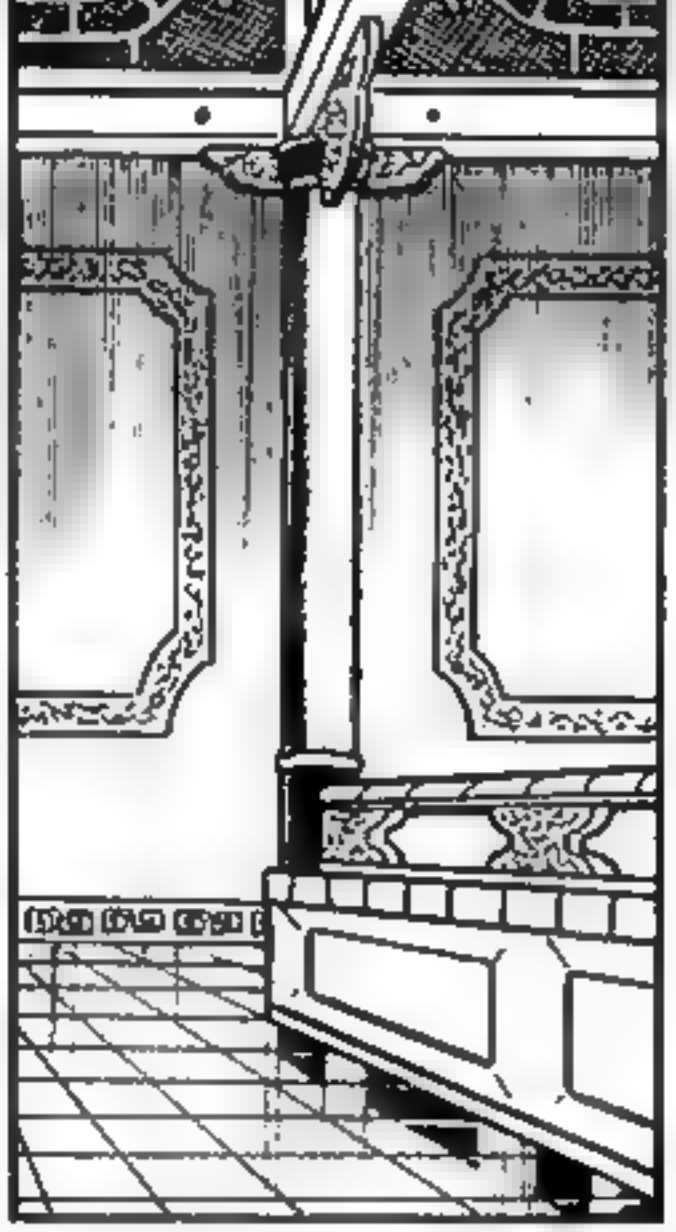
GO TELL YOUR LORD THAT SHUI JING HAS COME.

AND WHOM MIGHT YOU BE, SIR?

PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR A MOMENT.

SHUI JING?

YES, SIR.



YES, SIR.

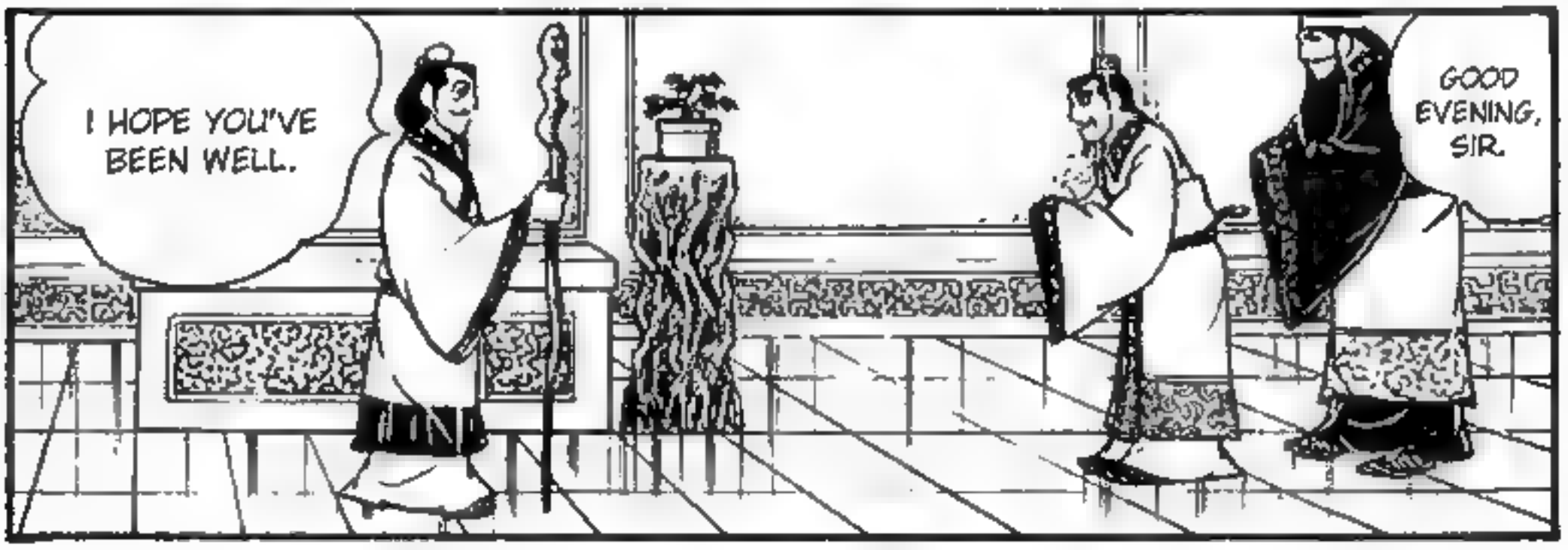
LET HIM IN COURTEOUSLY.

IT MUST BE MASTER SHUI JING!






YES, YES.
PLEASE GO RIGHT IN, SIR.


I HOPE YOU'VE BEEN WELL.
GOOD EVENING, SIR.


I'M AFRAID HE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE.


HM?


TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I CAME HERE TO SEE XU SHU.


HIS MOTHER ASKED HIM TO COME SAVE HER...?
HE LEFT AFTER RECEIVING A CALL FOR HELP FROM HIS MOTHER WHO WAS ARRESTED BY CAO CAO.


I HAPPPEN TO KNOW XU SHU'S MOTHER QUITE WELL.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HOW ODD...

ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT THE LETTER WAS FAKE?

MOST LIKELY...

AS A NOBLE AND WISE WOMAN, SHE'S NOT THE TYPE TO WRITE A LETTER FOR HELP EVEN IF SHE WERE ARRESTED.

BY THE WAY, BEFORE XU SHU LEFT, HE RECOMMENDED AN INDIVIDUAL NAMED ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING TO ME. HOW WELL ACQUAINTED ARE YOU WITH THIS KONGMING FELLOW?

EVEN AS HE'S LEAVING, I SEE HE'S STILL CAUSING TROUBLE FOR OTHERS.

HAHAHA! THAT XU SHU...

HIS WORDS WILL ONLY CAUSE TROUBLE FOR KONGMING.

CAUSING TROUBLE?

YOU MEAN YOUR GROUP OF SCHOLAR FRIENDS? MIGHT I ASK WHO SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE?

NOT ONLY THAT, IF KONGMING DOES STEP OUT INTO THE WORLD, OUR GROUP WOULD BECOME RATHER LONELY.

ZHUGE LIANG OF NANYANG, CUI ZHOUPING OF BOLING, SHI GUANGYUAN OF YINGCHUAN, MENG GONGWEI OF RUNAN, AND XU SHU. THEY'RE A TIGHT-KNIT GROUP OF FRIENDS.

WELL THAT'S NOT SURPRISING CONSIDERING HOW MUCH HE DISLIKES FAME...

HMM, ALL THOSE MEN WITH THE EXCEPTION OF KONGMING ARE RELATIVELY WELL KNOWN.

IT'S INCONSEQUENTIAL TO ASK ABOUT THE MAN'S TALENT CONSIDERING HE IS UNWILLING TO EVER USE IT.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT HIS TALENT SURPASSES THOSE OF HIS FRIENDS?

HE CERTAINLY IS A MAN OF GREAT POTENTIAL BUT...

NOW THEN, I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME I GET GOING.

HE'S NOT A MAN EASILY SPURRED TO ACTION.

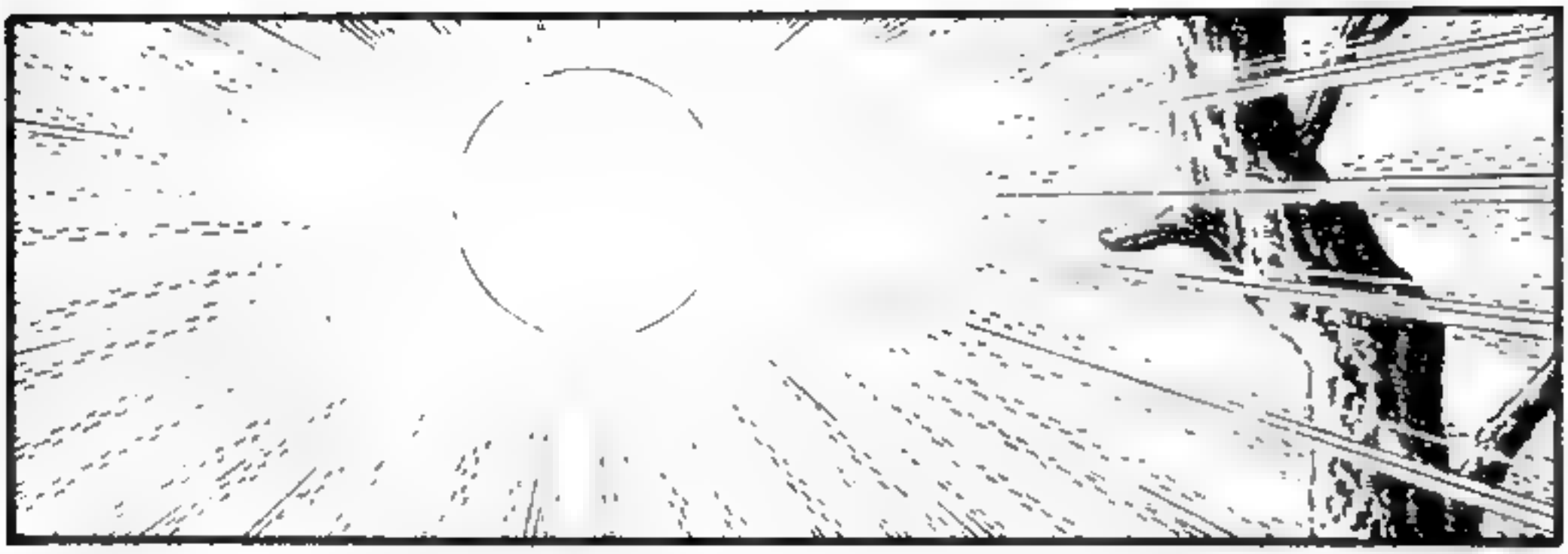
NO, NO, IT'S NOTHING.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR ADVICE, MASTER SHUI JING.

O' FULONG! A LORD YOU MAY FIND, BUT THE PROPER TIME AND PLACE YOU CANNOT, 'TIS A PITY...

IT IS A WASTE TO LEAVE A MAN OF HIS TALENT HIDDEN IN THE BACKCOUNTRY. I SWEAR I'LL MOVE HIS HEART NO MATTER WHAT.

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF A MAN KONGMING REALLY IS...?




OF COURSE.
ARE YOU REALLY PLANNING ON VISITING KONGMING YOURSELF?


DID YOU FORGET WHAT XU SHU AND MASTER SHUI JING SAID? KONGMING IS NOT A MAN THAT'S EASILY CONVINCED.


WOULDN'T IT BE ALRIGHT TO SEND A MESSENGER TO ASK HIM TO COME HERE?

BUT HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ONLY 25 OR 26 YEARS OLD. IS THERE REALLY A NEED TO BE SO POLITE TO A KID LIKE THAT?

IT WOULD BE BEST IF I VISIT HIM PERSONALLY AND LOWER MY HEAD.

BUT STILL, COMPARED TO US, HE'S LIKE A BABY CHICK!

TRUE TALENT IS UNRELATED TO AGE.

LISTEN WELL. THE LANDS OF NANYANG IS PEACEFUL BUT STEP ONE FOOT OUTSIDE AND YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF WAR. IT SHAN'T BE LONG BEFORE THOSE FIRES OF WAR ENGULF NANYANG AS WELL.

AFTER LOOKING AT THE IMPACT THAT XU SHU MADE, I'M SURE YOU'VE REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT A GOOD STRATEGIST IS.

THE ONLY WAY WE CAN PREPARE FOR THAT INEVITABILITY IS TO OBTAIN TALENTED INDIVIDUALS.

FINE, FINE. I'LL COME ALONG BROTHER BUT I'M STILL NOT REALLY BUYING INTO HIS *SUPPOSED* GENIUS.

NOW, COME ON THEN. YOU TWO ARE COMING ALONG AS WELL.

ENOUGH COMPLAINING AND JUST GET READY TO LEAVE.

LONGZHONG

All is well for the victors, while all is hell for the losers.

The blue skies overhang the go-board that is these lands.

Black and white stones continually come and go, the conflict continues.


Here in Nanyang, a dragon sleeps, but its sleep not nearly deep enough.




YOU THERE.


?


THAT'S A SONG I'M NOT QUITE FAMILIAR WITH. MIGHT I ASK WHO COMPOSED IT?


WHAT IS IT, SIR?

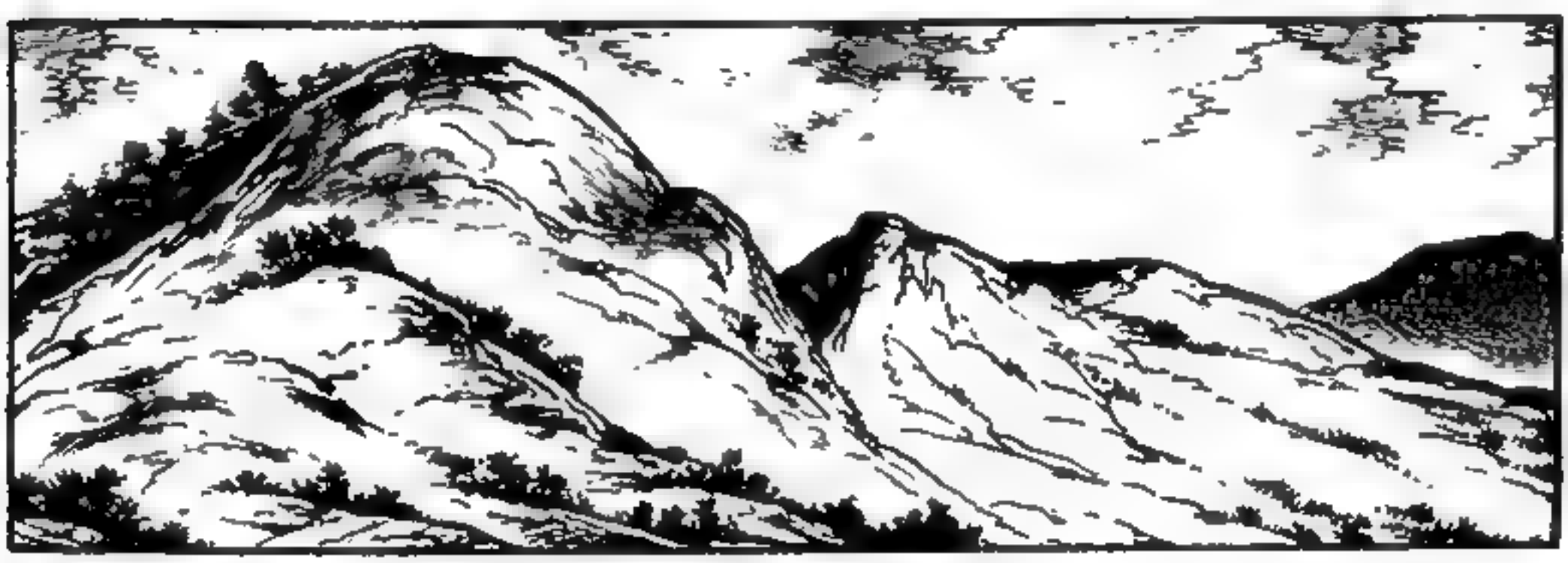
AND WHERE IS THIS MASTER FULONG?

I SEE...

OH, THIS IS A SONG THAT MASTER FULONG WROTE.

AH, YOU MEAN THAT HILL OVER THERE?

HE LIVES OVER BY THAT HILL. HIS HOUSE HAS A BRUSH-WOOD FENCE AND A NEWLY BUILT ROOF. IT SHOULD BE QUITE EASY TO SPOT.



Here in Nanyang, a dragon sleeps, but its sleep not nearly deep enough. How long shall it last?

THANK YOU, LAD.

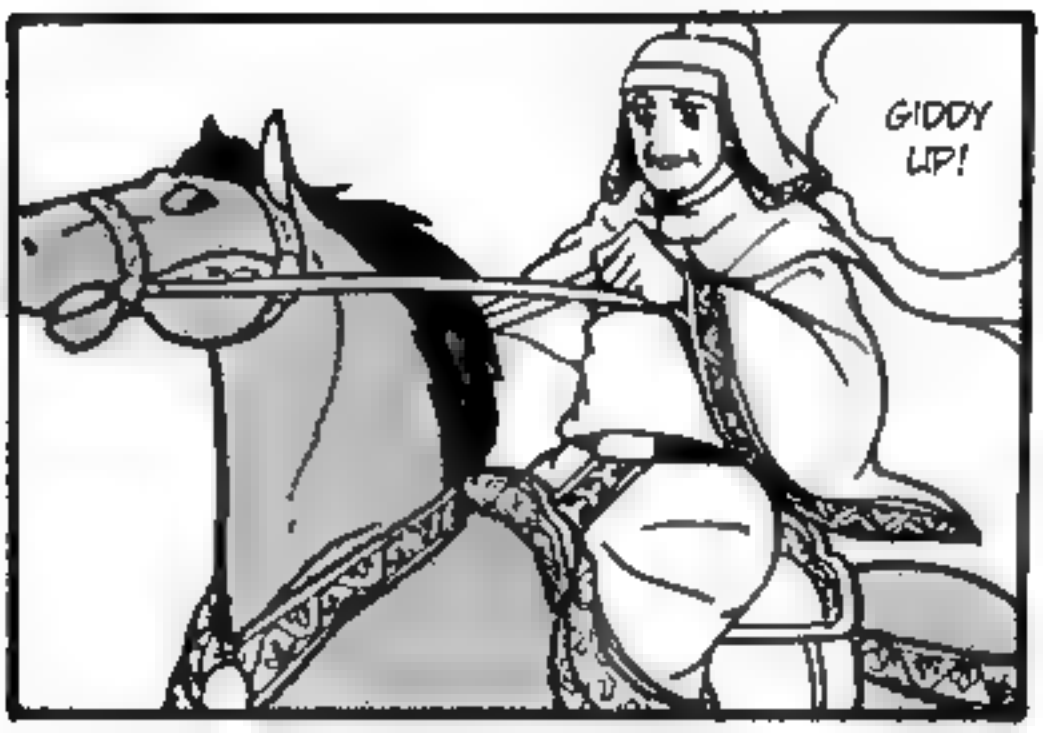
NOT AT ALL, SIR.

EVEN THE FARMERS AROUND HERE SEEM RATHER DIFFERENT.

HMM...

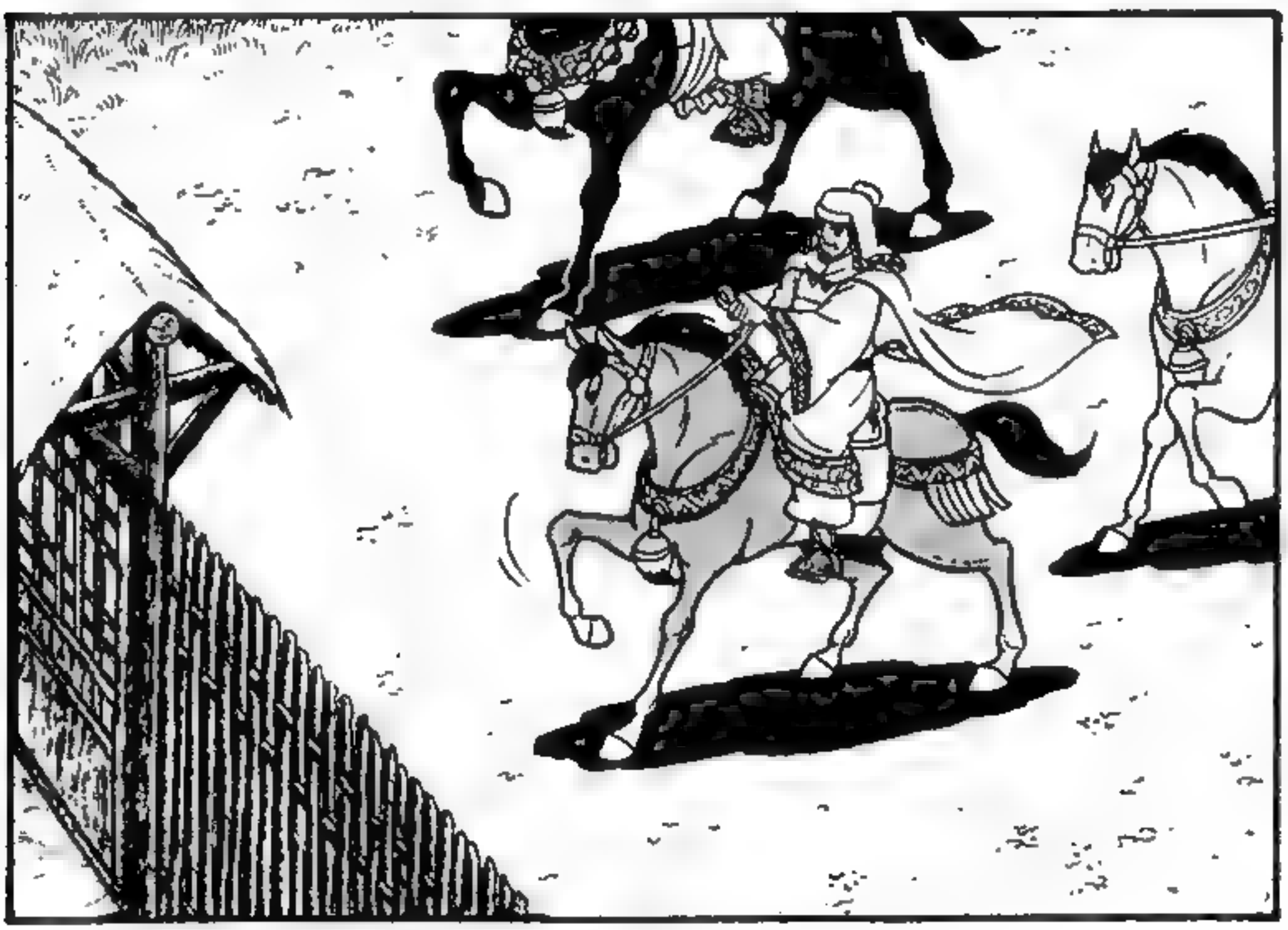



YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
THAT MUST BE HIS HOUSE UP AHEAD.


GIDDY UP!

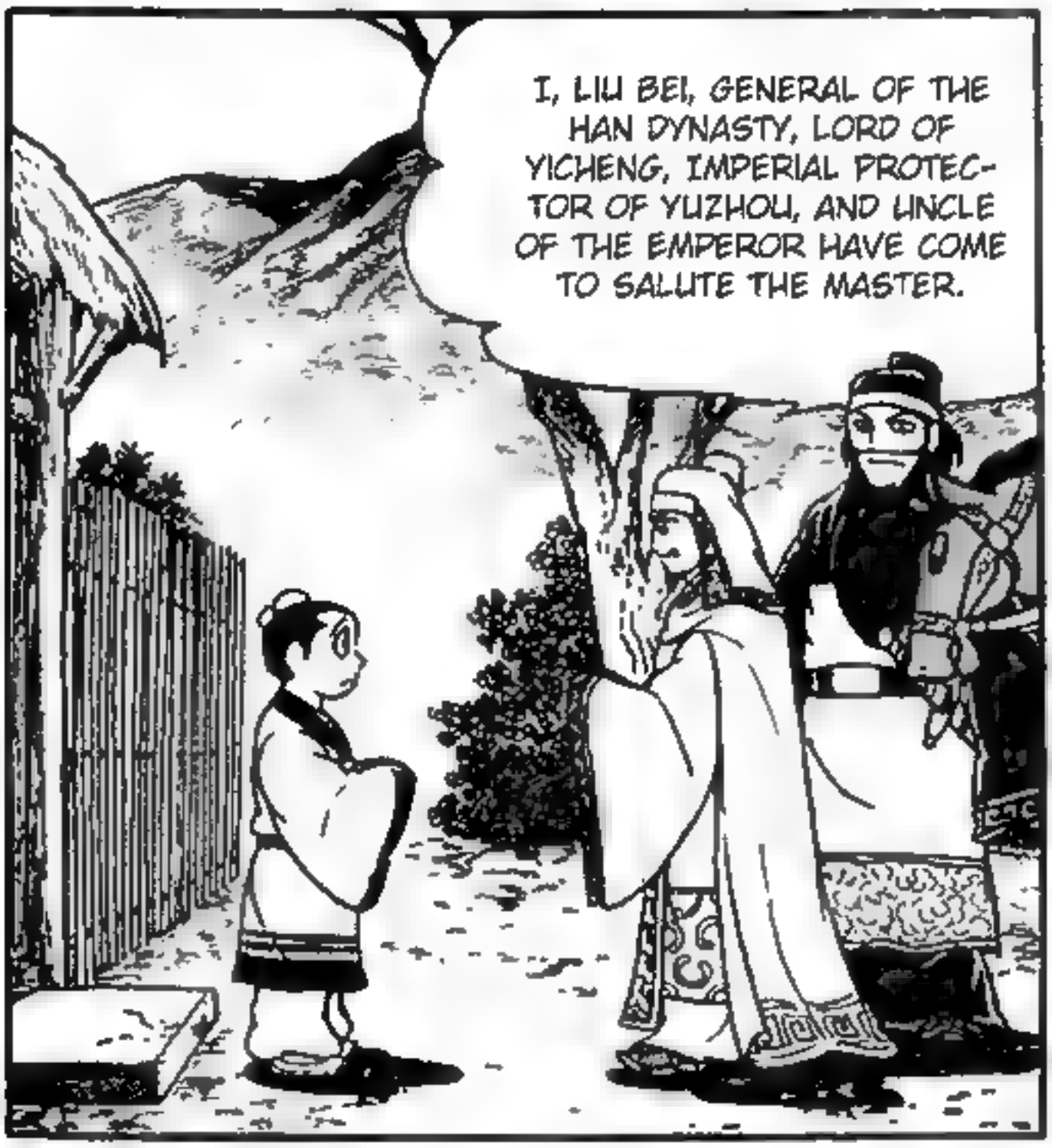

MY HEART IS QUITE ANXIOUS TO SEE WHAT KONGMING WILL BE LIKE.






HELLO THERE. IS THIS KONGMING'S HOME?


?


I, LIU BEI, GENERAL OF THE HAN DYNASTY, LORD OF YICHENG, IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF YUZHOU, AND UNCLE OF THE EMPEROR HAVE COME TO SALUTE THE MASTER.


YES, SIR.


AH, GOOD.


JUST SAY THAT LIU BEI OF XINYE HAS COME TO SEE KONGMING.
AH, MY BAD.


I'M SORRY BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER SUCH A LONG TITLE AFTER HEARING IT ONLY ONCE. COULD YOU SAY THAT AGAIN, SIR?

HE'S NOT HERE? THEN WHEN WILL HE BE BACK?

OH, YOU'VE COME TO SEE MASTER KONGMING? I'M SORRY BUT HE ACTUALLY LEFT EARLIER TODAY.

IT'S RATHER HARD TO SAY. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN HE LEAVES FOR OVER A MONTH WHILE OTHER TIMES, HE RETURNS BY NIGHTFALL.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN IT'D BE BEST IF WE RETURNED HOME FOR TODAY, MY LORD.

IS THAT SO...?

WE OUGHT TO ACTUALLY CHECK IF HE'S ACTUALLY AT HOME OR NOT BEFORE COMING TO VISIT NEXT TIME.

YOU'RE RIGHT...

WELL, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO IF HE'S NOT HERE.

I ONLY WISHED TO MEET HIM IF EVEN JUST A DAY EARLIER. HOW UNFOR-TUNATE.

HM?


COULD THAT BE HIM...?






?


I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GO HOME AFTER HEARING THAT SIR WAS NOT AT HOME.


W-WHAT IS IT, SIR?

I AM LIU BEI XUANDE OF XINYE.

I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE ME MISTAKEN FOR SOMEONE ELSE. WHOM MIGHT SIR BE?

CAN I PRESUME YOU ARE MASTER KONGMING?

SIR IS LORD LIU BEI!?

AH, SO YOU'RE A FRIEND OF KONGMING?

OH NO, NO. I'M JUST HIS FRIEND, CUI ZHOUPING.

YES, OF COURSE. SINCE YOU'RE KONGMING'S FRIEND, WHY DON'T WE SIT DOWN AND CHAT A LITTLE?

TO THINK THAT A MAN AS IMPORTANT AS YOURSELF WOULD COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE WITH ONLY TWO RETAINERS... MIGHT I INQUIRE WHY?

HAHAHA, I SEE.

YOU SEE, I WAS ON MY WAY TO VISIT KONGMING AND ASK FOR HIS GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RESTORE THE EMPIRE AND BRING PEACE TO THE PEOPLE.

IT SEEMS THAT SIR IS NOT ACQUAINTED WITH THE CONCEPT OF ORDER AND DISORDER.

I DO COMMEND SIR'S INTENTIONS BUT...

IT WOULD BE MY HONOUR.

MIGHT I ASK SIR TO TEACH ME ABOUT THIS CONCEPT THEN?

ORDER REPLACED DISORDER EVER SINCE EMPEROR GUANGWU OF HAN PUT AN END TO WANG MANG'S SHORT-LIVED XIN DYNASTY. BUT 200 YEARS OF PEACE LATER, THE STORMS OF CHAOS BEGAN TO BREW AGAIN AND WE ARE NOW IN THE AGE OF CHAOS ONCE MORE.

ORDER AND DISORDER ARE THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE UNIVERSE THAT MAKE UP THE WHOLE. THE LAWS OF NATURE DICTATE THAT CHAOS SHALL SUPPLANT ORDER, ONLY TO BE SUPPLANTED BY ORDER LATER ON.

FROM A HUMAN'S PERSPECTIVE, TWENTY YEARS IS A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. BUT IN THE EYES OF THE UNIVERSE, IT IS LESS THAN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.

YES, IT HAS BEEN AROUND TWENTY YEARS SINCE THIS AGE OF CHAOS BEGAN.

WHAT WE PERCEIVE AS A TYPHOON, THE UNIVERSE SEES AS A COLD BREEZE.

THAT MAY BE TRUE BUT EVEN SO, I CANNOT SIT IDLY BY. I BELIEVE IT IS MY LIFE'S PURPOSE TO SAVE THE PEOPLE FROM THIS STORM.

HOWEVER, LOOK CLOSELY AT THESE LANDS AND THINK ABOUT ALL THE KINGDOMS THAT HAVE RISEN AND FALLEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY.

THAT IS IDEAL, I AGREE.

ALTHOUGH I FULLY AGREE WITH SIR'S POINT, HOW COULD I SIMPLY SAY TO THE PEOPLE THAT THEIR SUFFERING IS NATURAL AND IT IS POINTLESS TO FIGHT IT?

THE WORLD IS LIKE THIS TREE HERE. ITS GREEN LEAVES WILL SOON WITHER AND DIE BUT IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE NEW LEAVES ARE BORN. THIS CYCLE OF ORDER AND DISORDER IS HOW THE UNIVERSE WORKS AND WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR ETERNITY.

AND EVEN IF KONGMING ALLOWS YOU TO RESTORE THE EMPIRE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ELIMINATE WAR FROM OUR WORLD.

BUT LET ME JUST SAY THAT SIR CANNOT CHANGE THE WAYS OF THIS UNIVERSE, EVEN WITH KONGMING'S HELP.

AH YES, THE BURDEN OF HEROES...

.....

KONGMING IS BUT A SINGLE MAN AND WE ALL KNOW THE LIFESPAN OF HUMANS IS NOT MUCH. HOW MUCH DO YOU BELIEVE HE CAN REALLY ACCOMPLISH IN HIS SHORT LIFE?

OH NOT AT ALL. CONSIDER IT AS MERELY THE RAMBLINGS OF A COUNTRYFOLK.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR WISDOM, CUI ZHOUPING.

I'M SORRY BUT I DON'T HAVE A CLUE EITHER. I WAS ACTUALLY ON MY WAY TO VISIT HIM BUT IF HE'S AWAY, I MIGHT AS WELL RETURN HOME.

BY THE WAY, WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE KONGMING WENT TO? I VISITED HIS HOME EARLIER TODAY BUT HE WAS AWAY.

EXCUSE ME THEN, SIR. IF FATE WILLS IT, MAY WE MEET AGAIN.

...NO.

DOES MY LORD BELIEVE THAT SCHOLAR'S WORDS TO BE THE TRUTH?

AS SUCH, THE TRUTH FOR ONE MAN IS NOT THE TRUTH FOR ALL.

THE WORLD IS NO ONE MAN'S THING. IT IS COLLECTIVELY OWNED BY ALL ITS INHABITANTS.

HIS WORDS ARE CERTAINLY TRUE FOR HIMSELF, BUT NOT TO THE MASSES OF PEOPLE.

HOWEVER INEVITABLE THE CYCLE OF ORDER AND DISORDER MAY BE, I HOPED THAT HE MIGHT STILL SAY EVEN ONE WORD ABOUT WANTING TO LESSEN THE PEOPLE'S SUFFERING.

THEN WHY DID YOU PATIENTLY LISTEN HIM TO THE VERY END, EVEN THOUGH YOU ALREADY UNDERSTOOD THE CONCEPT OF ORDER AND DISORDER?

UNFORTUNATELY NOT.

BUT HE SAID NO SUCH THINGS.

THAT IS WHAT I SEEK FROM KONGMING AS WELL.

WHAT I SEEK IS A MAN WHO WILL SAY THOSE WORDS.


I PRAY THAT KONGMING LIVES UP TO MY EXPECTATIONS.

VISIT AMIDST THE SNOWSTORM



WHAT IS IT?

MY LORD.

HE HAS!?

THE MESSENGER JUST REPORTED THAT KONGMING HAS RETURNED TO HIS HOME.

HANG ON A SECOND, BROTHER.

BRING ME MY HORSE AT ONCE!

OF COURSE I AM. I WOULD GO SEE HIM EVEN IF A TYPHOON WAS RAGING OUTSIDE.

IT'S JUST STARTED TO SNOW OUTSIDE. YOU'RE NOT REALLY THINKING OF GOING ALL THE WAY TO SEE HIM RIGHT NOW, ARE YOU?

I COULD GO AND BRING HIM HERE AT ONCE IF YOU WANT ME TO.

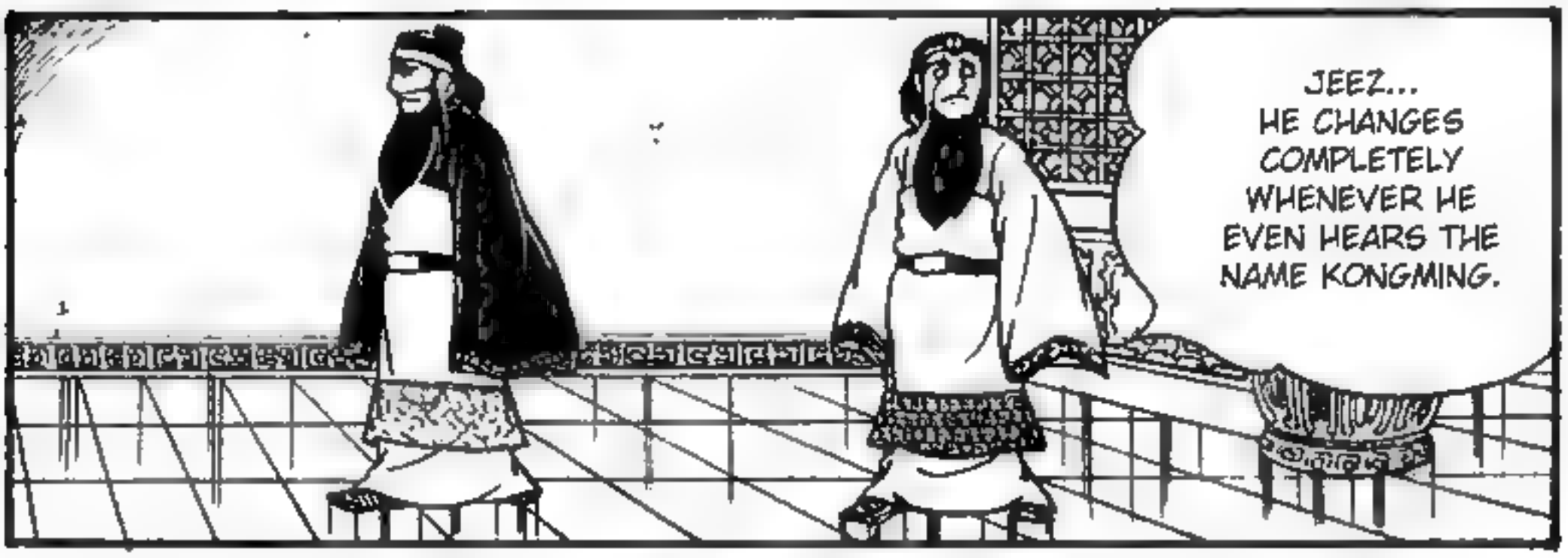
BUT THIS KONGMING FELLOW IS JUST SOME BOOKWORM FROM THE BACKCOUNTRY. THE PEOPLE OF XINYE MIGHT THINK LESS OF BROTHER IF YOU WILLINGLY CONDESCEND YOURSELF TO GO SEE HIM IN THIS SNOWSTORM. IT'D BE BETTER TO ASK HIM TO COME INSTEAD.

SAGE? WELL, I GUESS SOME PEOPLE MIGHT CONSIDER HIM AS ONE BUT...

DON'T BE IDIOTIC! HOW COULD I BE SO DISRESPECTFUL TO A SAGE?


STOP COM-
PLAINING AND
JUST GET
READY TO GO!


IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S
EVEN ALL THAT
WELL-KNOWN OR
ANYTHING. WHAT HAS
KONGMING ACTUALLY
ACCOMPLISHED
ANYWAYS?


JEEZ...
HE CHANGES
COMPLETELY
WHENEVER HE
EVEN HEARS THE
NAME KONGMING.


BROTHER, THE
HORSES ARE
READY TO GO!


YOU GUYS DON'T WANT
TO GO OUT IN THIS
SNOWSTORM EITHER,
RIGHT?






THANK YOU, ZHANG FEI.








GUAN YU, DON'T YOU THINK WE LOOK LIKE IDIOTS DOING THIS?


SO FREAKIN' COLD....


OH COME ON! JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU HONESTLY THINK.


.....


STOP WITH THE FOOLISH COMPLAINTS.
BROTHER, LET'S GO BACK TO XINYE ALREADY. THERE'S NO USE IN FREEZING TO DEATH JUST TO GET HELP FROM SOME UNKNOWN PERSON.


IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
I'M NOT AFRAID OF DYING OUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD BUT I'D RATHER NOT RISK DEATH BY GOING ON THIS WILD GOOSE CHASE. IS ALL THIS EFFORT REALLY NECESSARY?

THOSE ARE GOOD INTENTIONS BUT HE MIGHT THINK OF US AS JUST BOTHERSOME SINCE WE'RE DISTURBING HIM IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS SNOWSTORM.

I'M TRYING TO PROVE TO KONGMING THE SINCERITY OF MY ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR HIM.

IF YOU DON'T WISH TO COME ALONG, YOU CAN JUST GO BACK TO XINYE ALONE RIGHT NOW!

ヒヒィン

WE'RE ALMOST THERE ANYWAYS, I MIGHT AS WELL GO...

The bloody battle of Muye drives the last stake home,

Kill the King of Shang first thing in the morning after~

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

DO YOU HEAR THAT?

HM?

And there goes the Gaoyang rustic,

off to serve the man of handsome face,

And one who spoke of ruling chiefs,

In tones so bold and free,

IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THE INN OVER THERE.

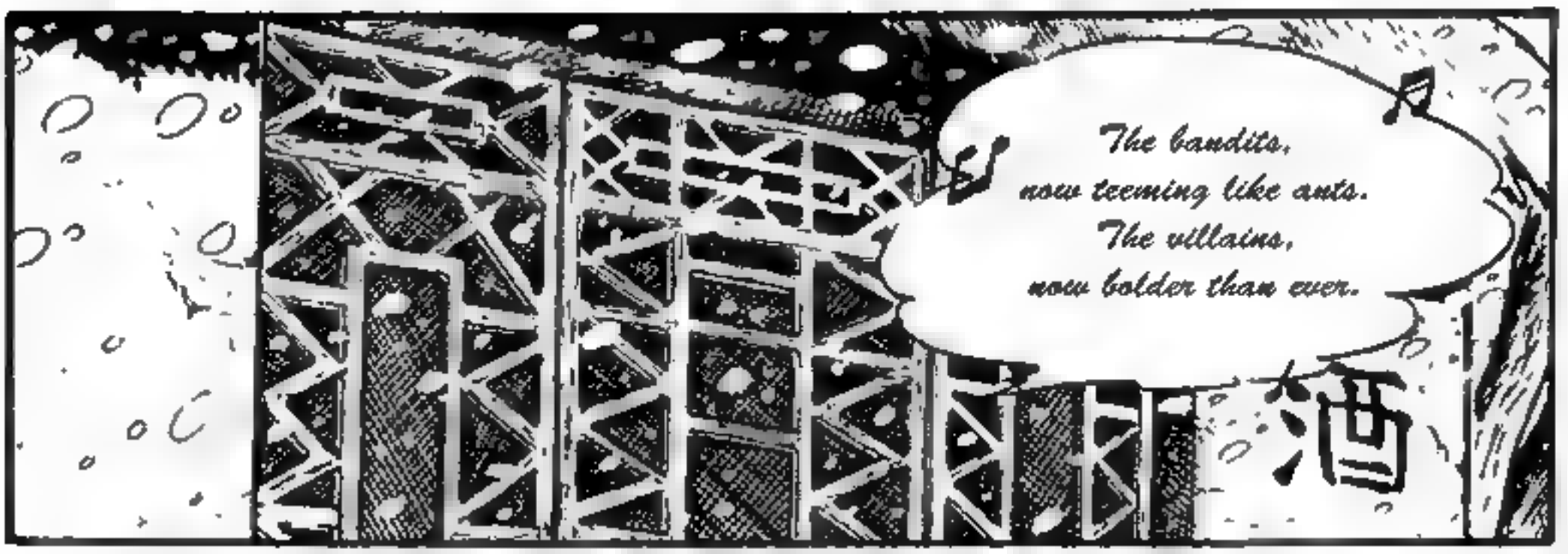

With the rise of the Supreme Ancestor,
and the swing of his shining sword,
the lands have been cleansed,
paving the way for 400 years of peace.


THAT KONGMING IS SINGING?
COULD IT BE...

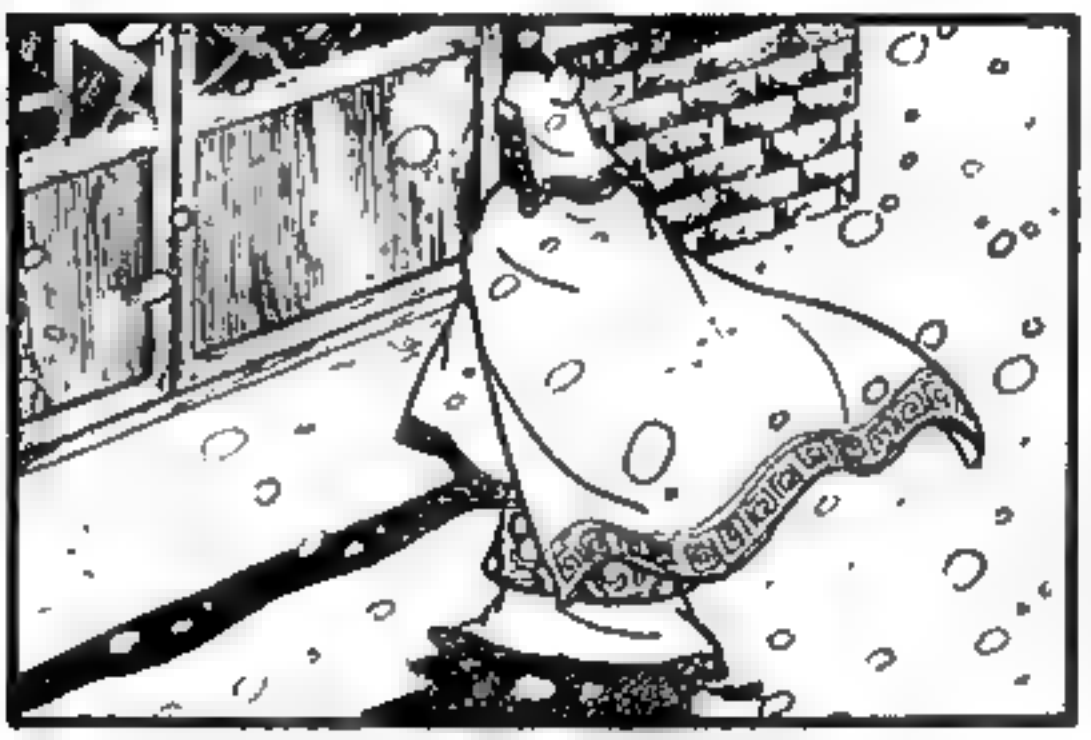

IT'S A SONG LAMENTING THE WORLD'S CURRENT STATE.


LET'S GO TAKE A LOOK.


But with the succession of Huandi, followed by Lingdi,
the fiery virtue of Han fails and the ministers turn their backs.


The bandits,
now teeming like ants.
The villains,
now bolder than ever.


O' how pitiful
and vexing it is.
Let us drown our
woes away in
this glass.





?

WELCOME.

THEN MIGHT YOU BE...

SORRY, BUT NO.

MIGHT YOU BE MASTER FULONG?

I SEE... IT APPEARS I JUMPED TO CONCLU-SIONS TOO QUICK.

I'M NOT FULONG EITHER, SIR.


MY APOLOGIES FOR THE LATE INTRODUCTIONS. I AM LIU BEI XUANDE OF XINYE.




MAY I ASK WHO HAS COME LOOKING FOR FULONG IN THE MIDST OF THIS SNOWSTORM?

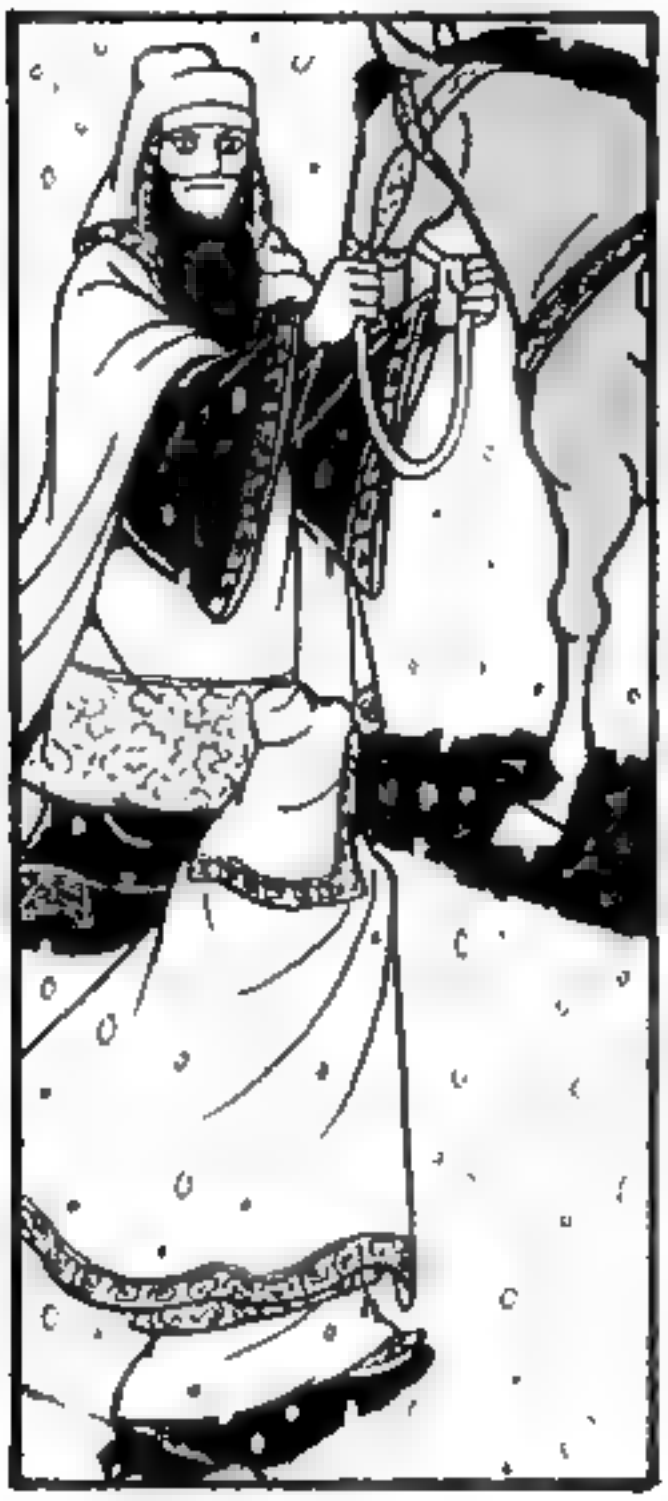

I AM SHI GUANGYUAN OF YINGCHUAN AND MY FRIEND HERE IS MENG GONGWEI OF RUNAN.


NO, NO. EXCUSE ME FOR NOT RECOGNIZING SIR.

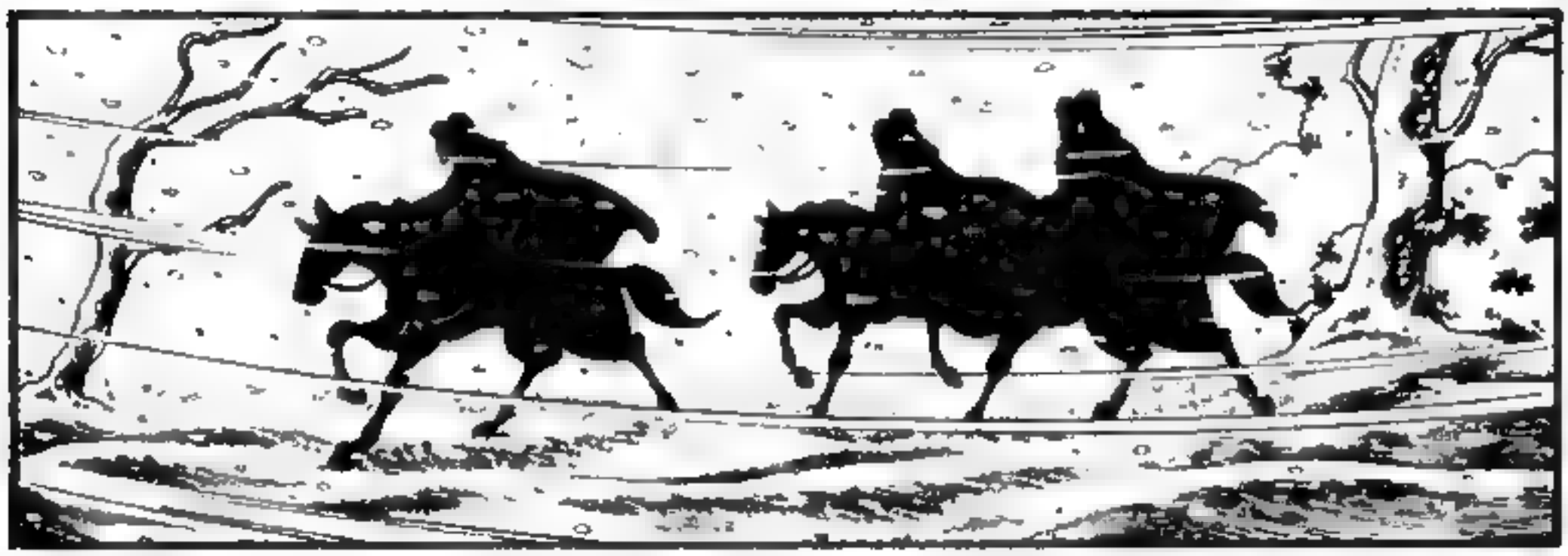

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME WITH ME AND VISIT FULONG'S HOME? YOU ARE HIS FRIENDS, ARE YOU NOT?

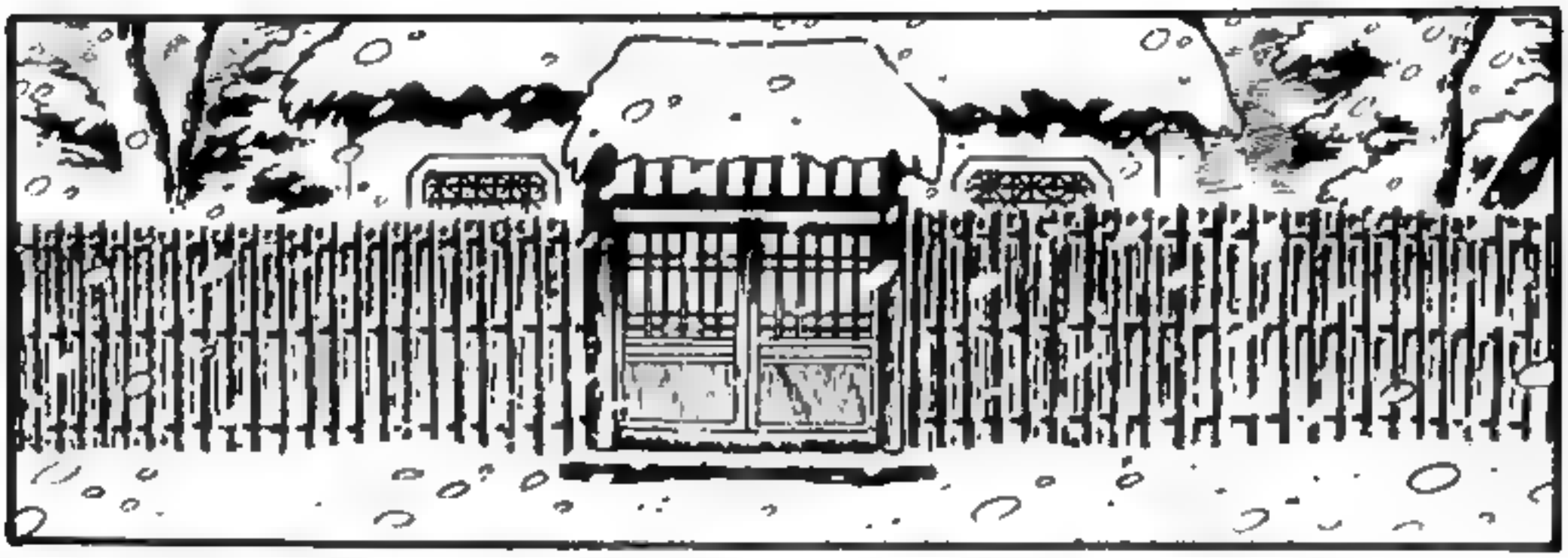

AH, SHI GUANGYUAN AND MENG GONGWEI! YOU TWO ARE WELL KNOWN SCHOLARS, ARE YOU NOT?


I SEE...
WE ARE SIMPLE MOUNTAINFOLK THAT IDLY PASS AWAY OUR TIME. I'M AFRAID WE'RE NOWHERE NEAR QUALIFIED TO INTRUDE UPON THE PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN SIR AND KONGMING.

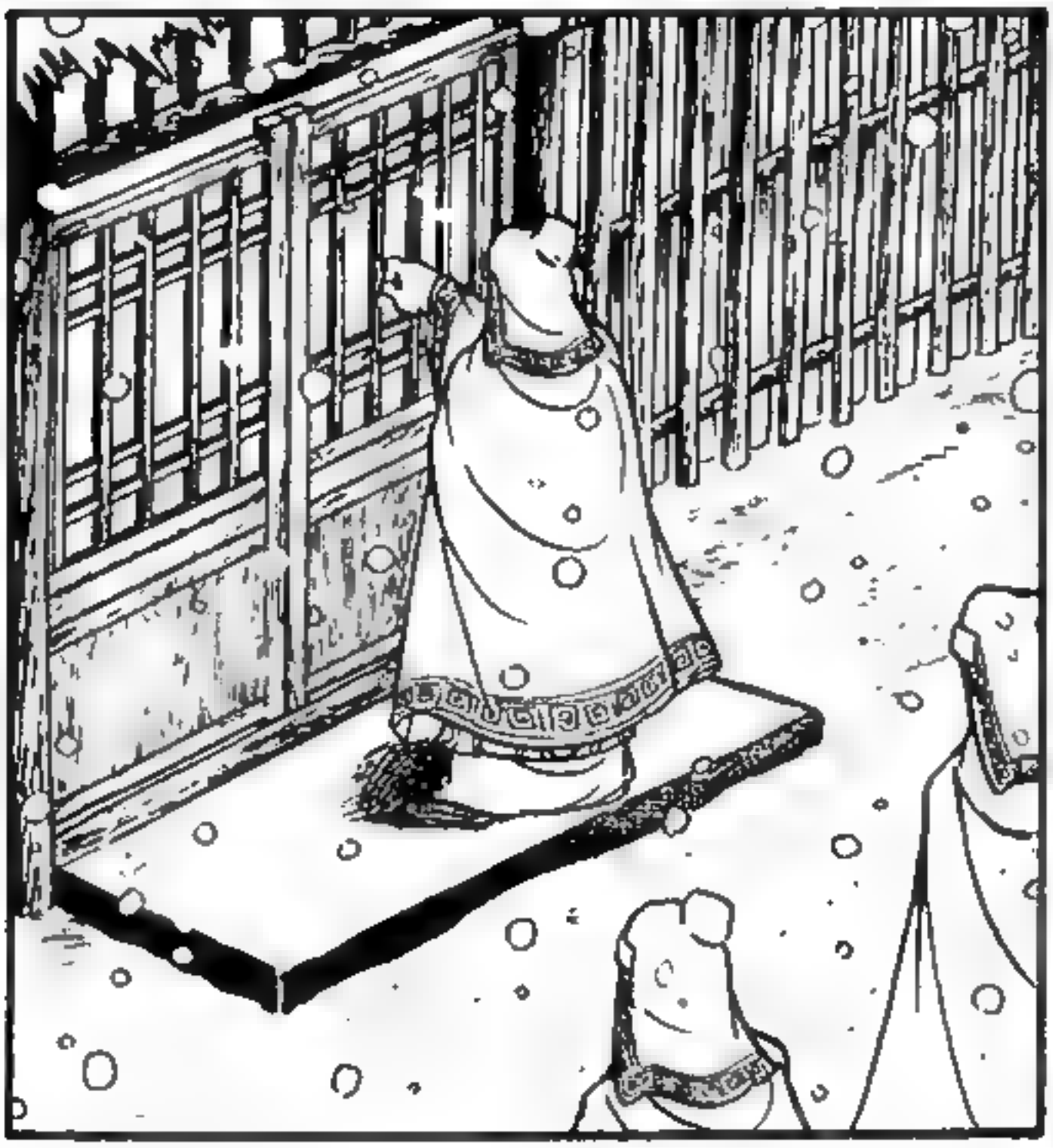


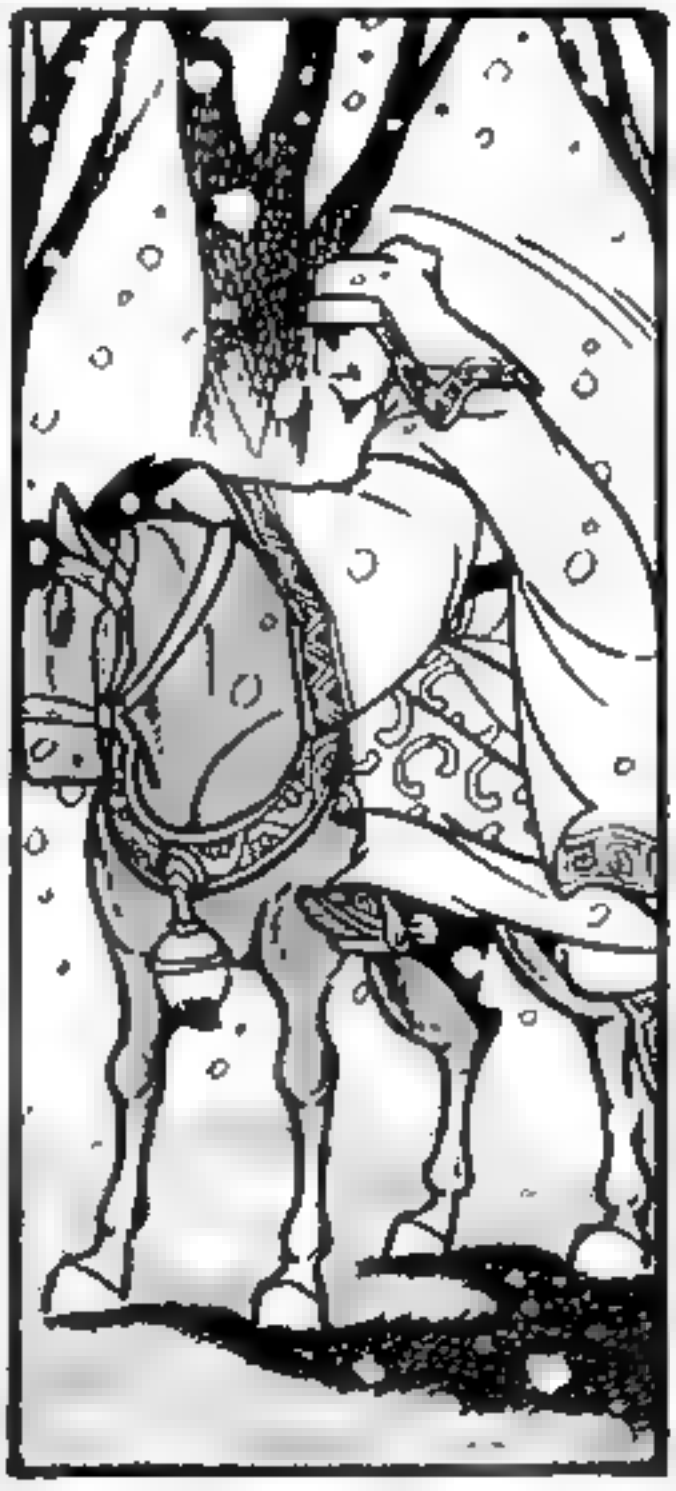

NO, NOT AT ALL.
EXCUSE ME FOR THE SUDDEN INTRUSION, GENTLEMEN. I MUST NOW GET GOING.






WE'RE FINALLY HERE.






OH, YOU'RE THE VISITOR FROM BEFORE.


COMING!


THIS WAY, SIR.


YES, HE SHOULD BE IN THE STUDY READING.
IS THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IN RIGHT NOW?


MASTER, THE GUESTS FROM LAST TIME HAVE COME AGAIN.

THE GUESTS FROM LAST TIME?

HUH?

KONGMING?

IT IS AN HONOUR TO MEET YOU AT LAST, MASTER KONGMING. I AM LIU BEI XUANDE OF XINYE.

YES, KONGMING IS MY OLDER BROTHER. I AM HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, ZHUGE JUN.

BROTHER?

HAS SIR COME TO SEE MY BROTHER?

HE ACTUALLY WENT OUT WITH CUI ZHOUPING THIS MORNING.

MAY I ASK WHERE YOUR BROTHER IS RIGHT NOW?

I'M AFRAID IT'S HARD TO SAY. THEY MIGHT BE SAILING ON A BOAT, VISITING SOME REMOTE MOUNTAIN TEMPLE, OR DOING SOME OTHER THING WHEREVER.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO?

BROTHER, IF HE'S NOT HERE, THEN THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO. LET US HURRY BACK HOME.

I SEE...

COULD IT BE THAT HE AND I ARE NOT FATED TO MEET...?

BUT ONCE HE DOES RETURN, I'LL TELL MY BROTHER TO GO PAY SIR A VISIT.

I DOUBT HE'LL BE BACK BY TOMORROW.

THEN I SHALL TRY VISITING AGAIN TOMOROW.

WHY YES, OF COURSE.

BUT BEFORE I LEAVE, I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE HIM A MESSAGE. DO YOU HAVE A BRUSH AND PAPER?

NO, NO. THAT WON'T BE NECES-SARY. I'LL BE THE ONE TO VISIT.

I, LIU BEI, HAVE LONG ADMIRED SIR AND DESIRED TO PAY A VISIT.

THANK YOU.

HERE YOU GO, SIR.

UNFORTUNATELY, SIR WAS AWAY DURING THE TWO TIMES I CAME TO SIR'S HOME. THE WORLD WE LIVE IN NOWADAYS HAS BECOME TRULY CHAOTIC. THE IMPERIAL COURT HAS LOST ITS AUTHORITY DUE TO THE UNDERMINING OF REGIONAL LORDS WHILE REBELS DISRESPECT THE EMPEROR. LOOKING BY AT THIS SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS, I FEEL AS IF MY HEART HAS BEEN TORN TO PIECES.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BROTHER? YOU AREN'T WRITING A POEM, ARE YOU NOW?

BE QUIET!

IF WE DON'T HURRY BACK, WE'LL BE STUCK IN THIS MOUNTAIN FOR THE NIGHT!

DESPITE MY DESIRE TO RESTORE THE EMPIRE, I LACK THE KNOWLEDGE AND THUS TURN TO SIR FOR HELP.

I SHALL COME VISIT AGAIN TO EARNESTLY CONVEY MY FEELINGS TO SIR BUT IN THE MEANWHILE, I LEAVE BEHIND THIS LETTER.

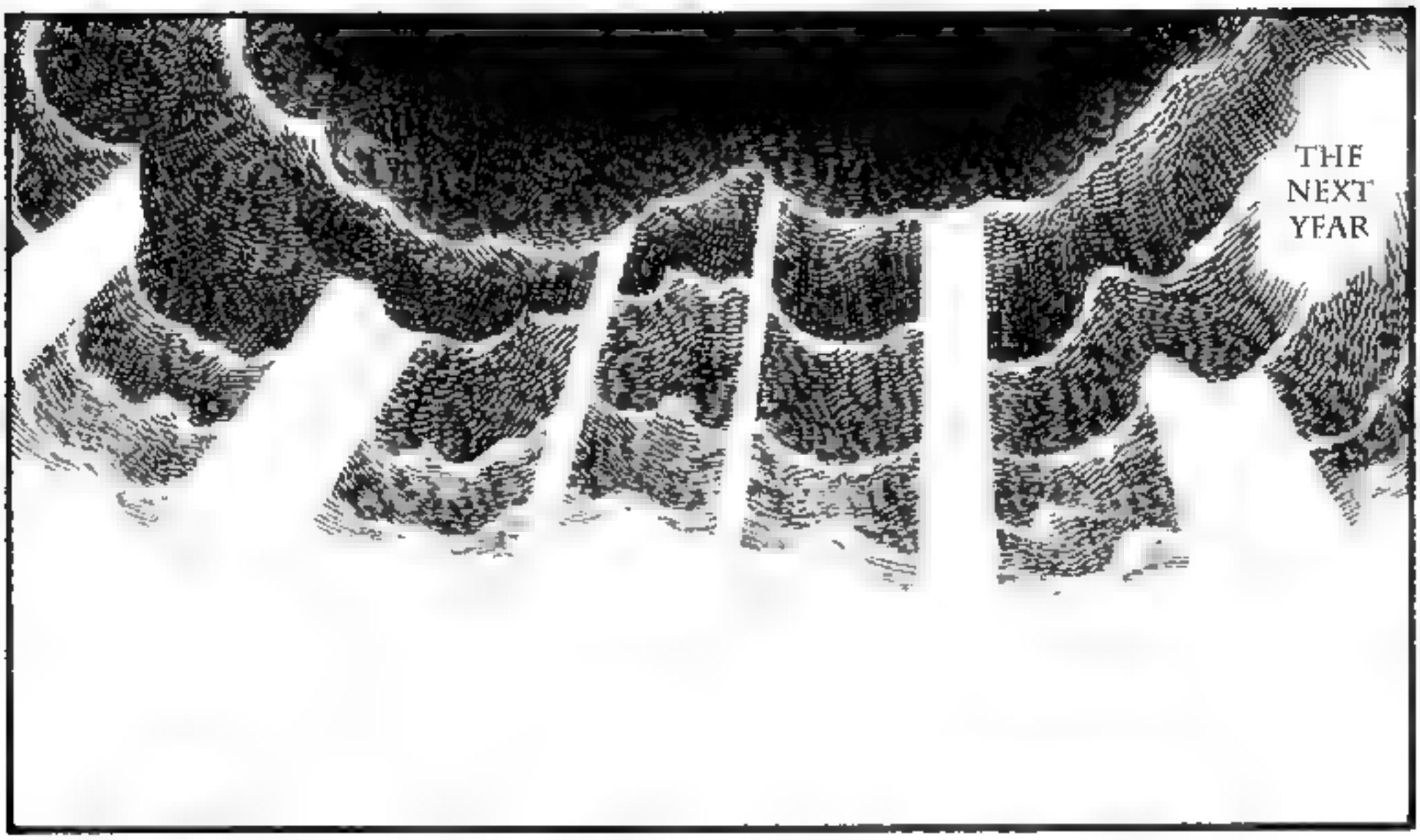
THERE COULD BE NO GREATER BLESSING THAN IF SIR WOULD UTILIZE YOUR TALENT AND WISDOM FOR THE GOOD OF THIS NATION.

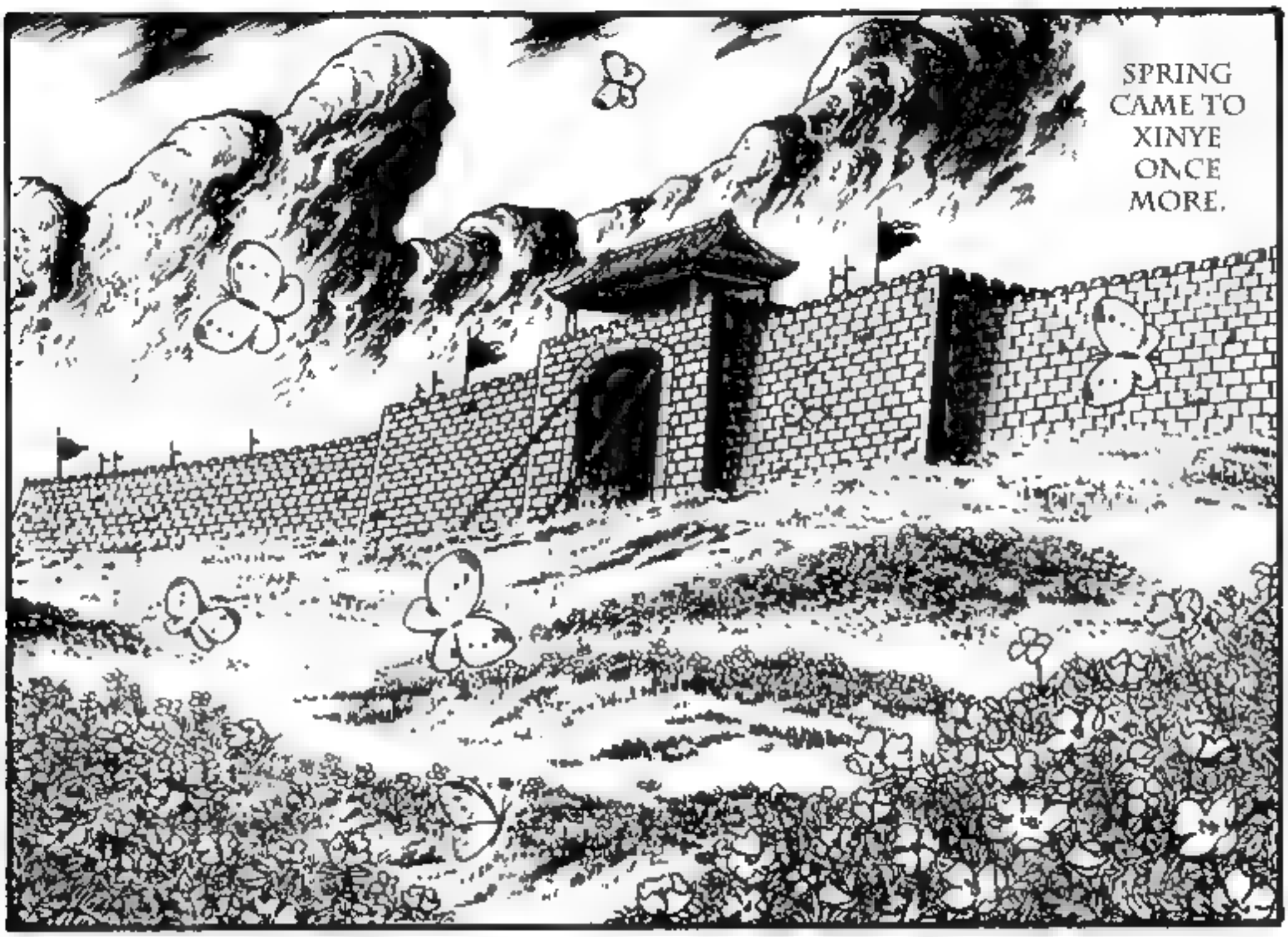

ALRIGHT THEN, LET US RETURN.

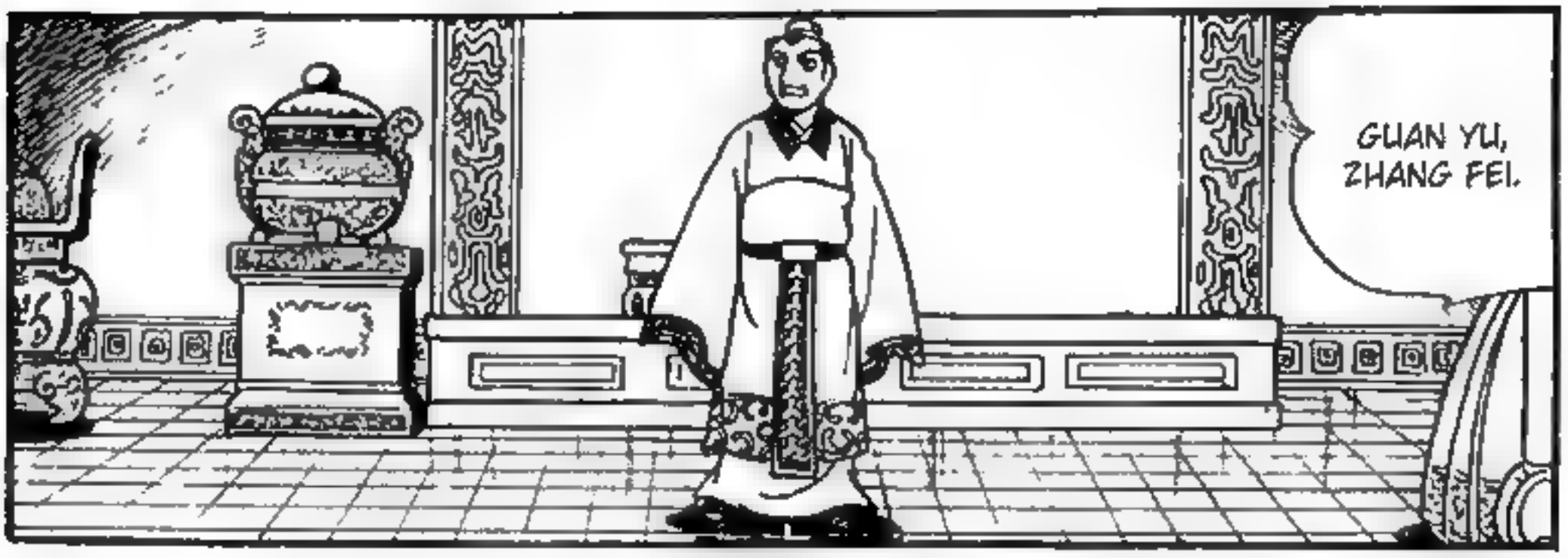

YES, SIR.
PLEASE PASS THIS LETTER TO KONGMING.

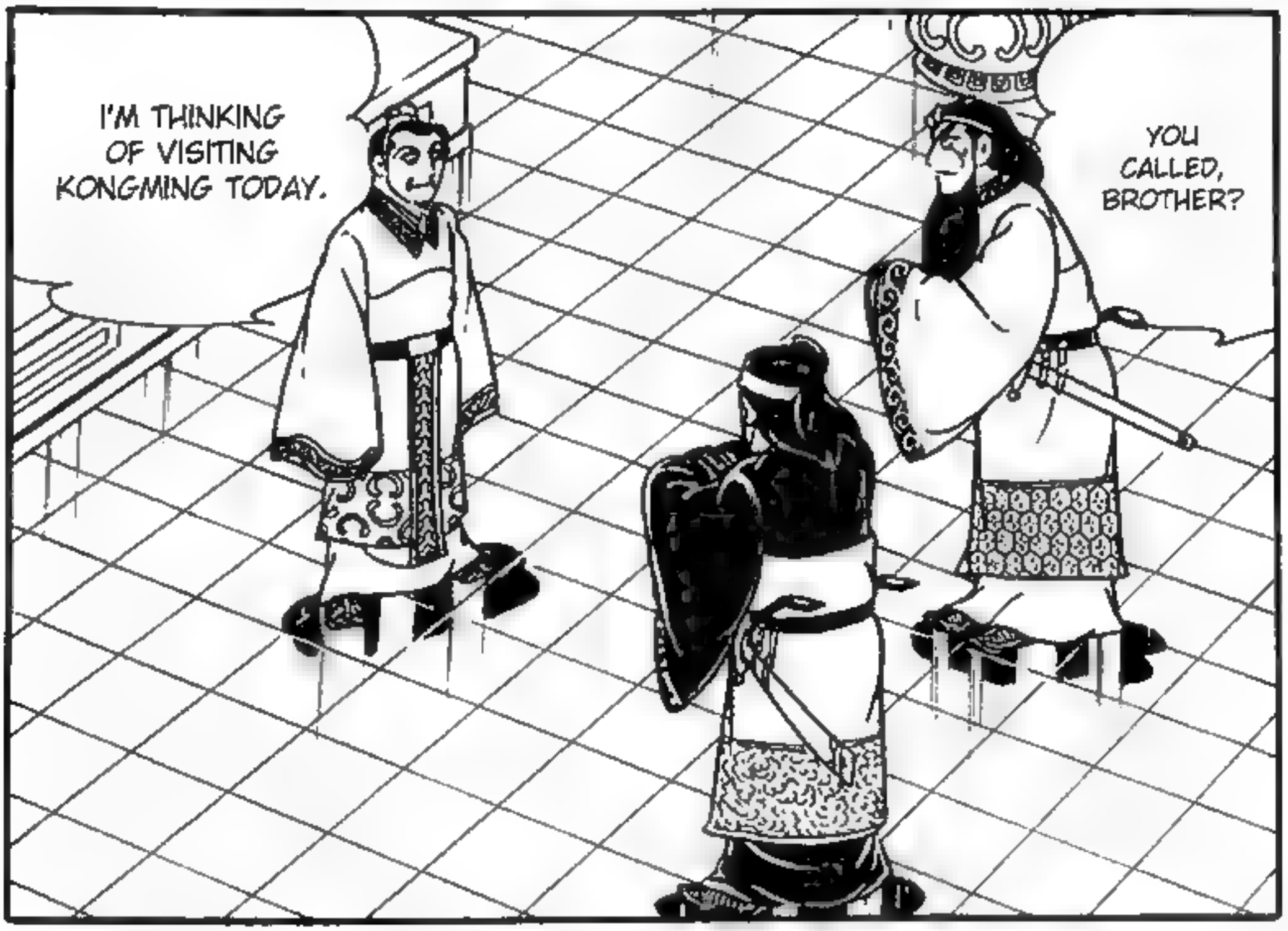

AND THUS DID LIU BEI ATTEMPT TO MEET KONGMING TWO TIMES ONLY TO RETURN EMPTY-HANDED BACK TO XINYE TWO TIMES

THE THIRD VISIT






GUAN YU, ZHANG FEI.


I'M THINKING OF VISITING KONGMING TODAY.
YOU CALLED, BROTHER?


I KNOW YOU'RE TRYING TO BE RESPECTFUL BUT 3 TIMES IS JUST TOO MUCH.
PLEASE JUST GIVE IT A REST, BROTHER.


A-AGAIN!? YOU STILL HAVEN'T GIVEN UP?
KONG-MING!?

NO, I'M CERTAIN HE'S A REAL SAGE, THROUGH AND THROUGH.

SEEING MY LORD'S ZEAL FOR KONGMING REMINDS ME OF KING WEN OF ZHOU WHEN HE SOUGHT OUT TAIGONG WANG.

THAT'S WHY HE'S TRYING TO PURPOSELY AVOID YOU! SINCE HIS ACT WILL BE FOUND OUT OTHERWISE.

IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER, I'D SAY THAT KONGMING IS JUST A FRAUD PRETENDING TO BE SMARTER THAN HE ACTUALLY IS.

LONG, LONG AGO, THERE WAS A KIND KING WHO SOUGHT A WISE SAGE.

WHAT? WHO'S THIS KING WEN AND TAIGONG OR WHATEVER?

HMPH, SOME EGO THAT SAGE HAS.

BUT WHEN KING WEN WENT TO THE WEI RIVER TO MEET THE SAGE, TAIGONG WANG WAS TOO BUSY FISHING TO EVEN TURN AROUND.

BUT KING WEN STOOD SILENTLY BEHIND AS TO NOT DISTURB THE SAGE AND WAS SAID TO HAVE WAITED UNTIL THE SUN SET.

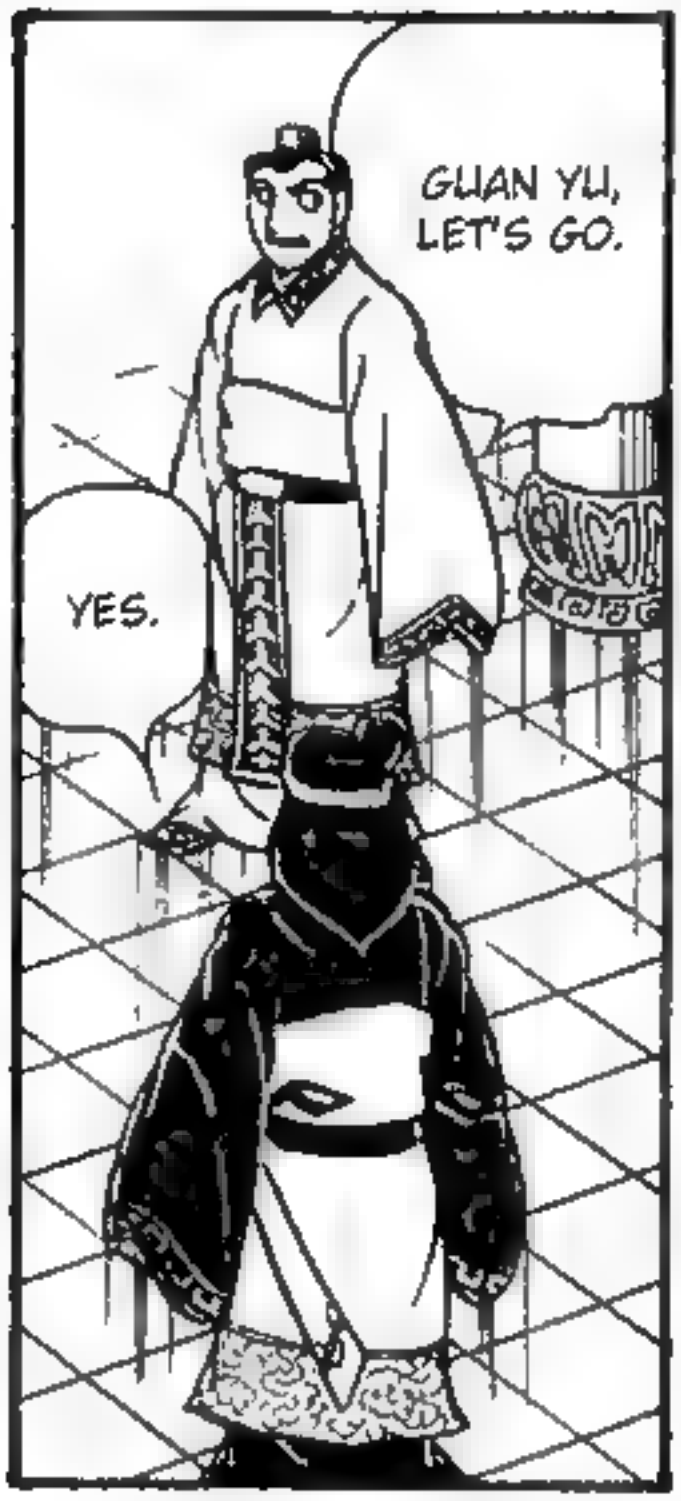
MEN OF THE PAST HAVE ALWAYS DEEPLY ADMIRED SAGES AS KING WEN DID.

TAIGONG WANG WAS TOUCHED BY KING WEN'S ACTIONS AND DECIDED TO HELP HIM, WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE GLORIOUS ZHOU DYNASTY THAT WOULD LAST 800 YEARS.

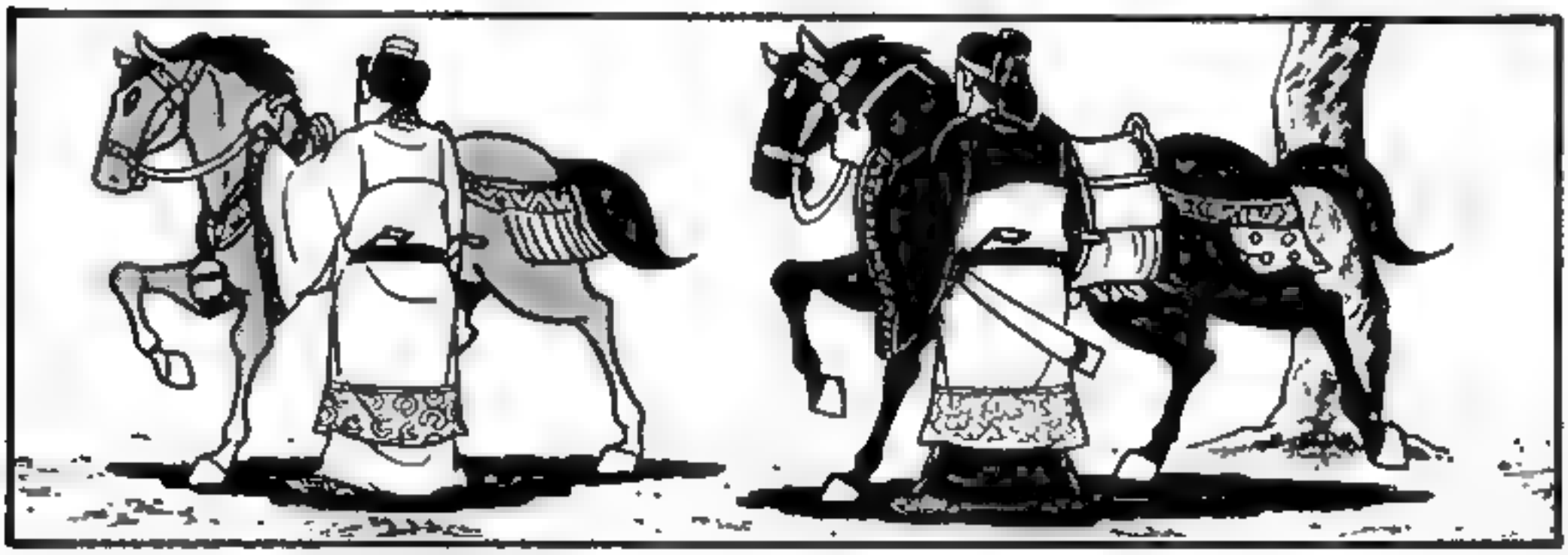
SILENCE!

WELL, THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE TAIGONG WANG PROVED TO BE THE REAL DEAL. CAN THE SAME BE SAID FOR KONGMING?


ZHANG FEI, YOU CAN JUST STAY HERE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO. IF KONGMING SEES THAT DISRESPECTFUL ATTITUDE OF YOURS, ALL MY EFFORT UNTIL NOW WILL COME TO NOTHING.


GUAN YU, LET'S GO.
YES.


FINE. I DIDN'T WANT TO GO ANWAYS.




HMM? I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GOING TO COME ALONG?

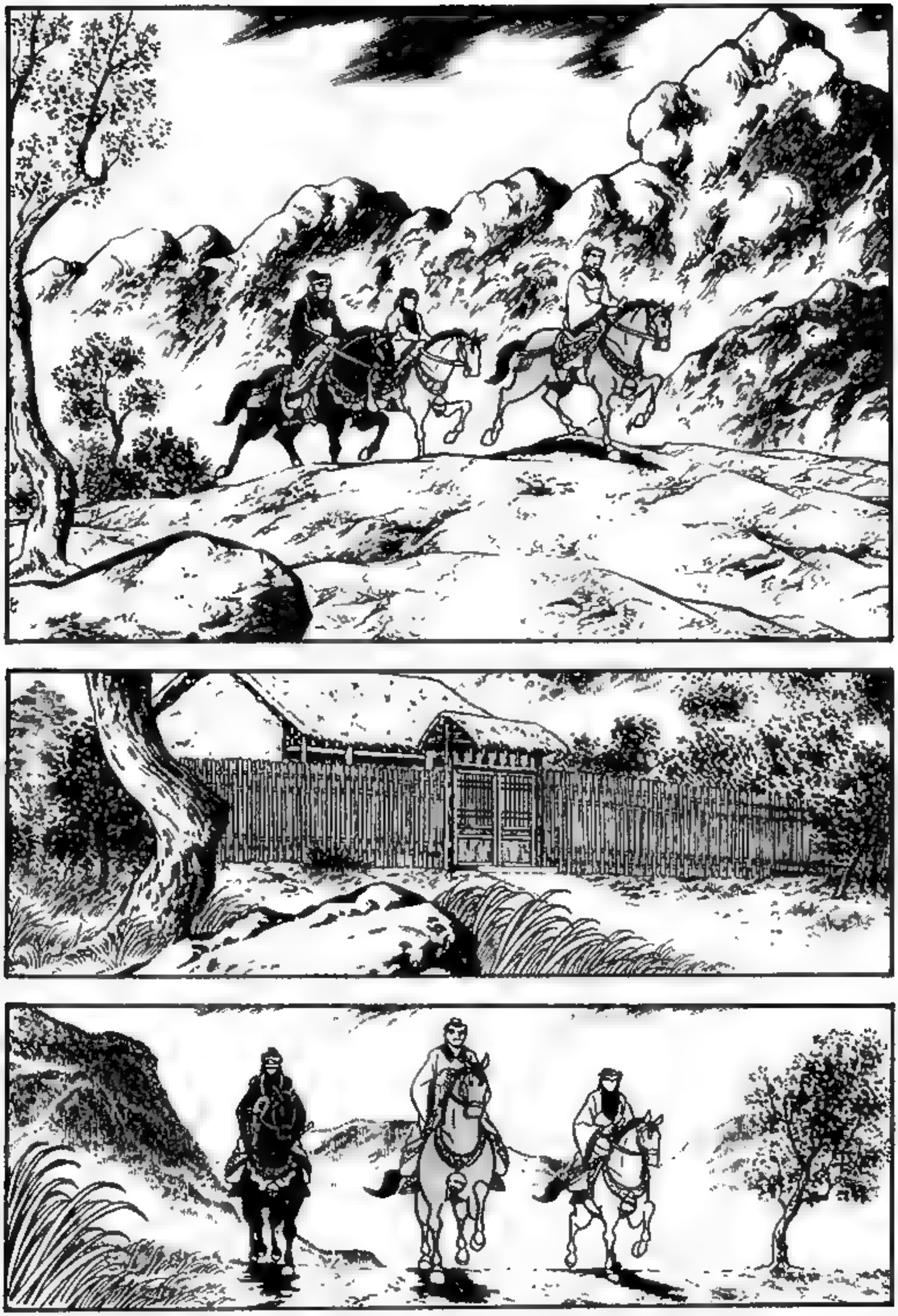



BUT IF YOU GO...


WELL, WE *ARE* THREE BROTHERS THAT SWORE TO LIVE AND DIE TOGETHER SO HOW CAN I JUST STAY BEHIND?


YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW. I'LL KEEP MY TRAP SHUT, ALRIGHT?








YES, I HOPE SO TOO.
I HOPE HE'S HERE THIS TIME.


GOOD DAY, SIR. YOU'VE COME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME.
AH HELLO AGAIN, ZHUGE JUN.






YES, HE CAME HOME JUST LAST NIGHT.


SO YOU MEAN YOUR BROTHER IS...

YES, SO GO RIGHT IN AND MEET WITH HIM.

HE'S HERE!?

AS FOR ME, I HAVE TO GET GOING NOW SO EXCUSE ME, SIR.

AHH!

ZHANG FEI! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?

WHY THAT SON OF A..!

BUT THAT KID DIDN'T EVEN LEAD OUR LORD INSIDE! I SHOULD BE ASKING *YOU* WHY YOU'RE NOT ENRAGED AT SUCH IMPUDENCE!

MUST YOU BE SO EASILY AGITATED ALL THE TIME, ZHANG FEI?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M DOING!? I'M GOING TO TEACH THAT YOUNG-STER SOME MANNERS!

FINE! YOU WANT ME TO KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT EVEN IF HE INSULTS US, RIGHT?

QUIET DOWN, ZHANG FEI.

NOW LET US GO INSIDE.

COULD YOU GO IN AND TELL KONGMING THAT I AM HERE TO SEE HIM?

MASTER KONGMING IS ACTUALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS NAP RIGHT NOW.

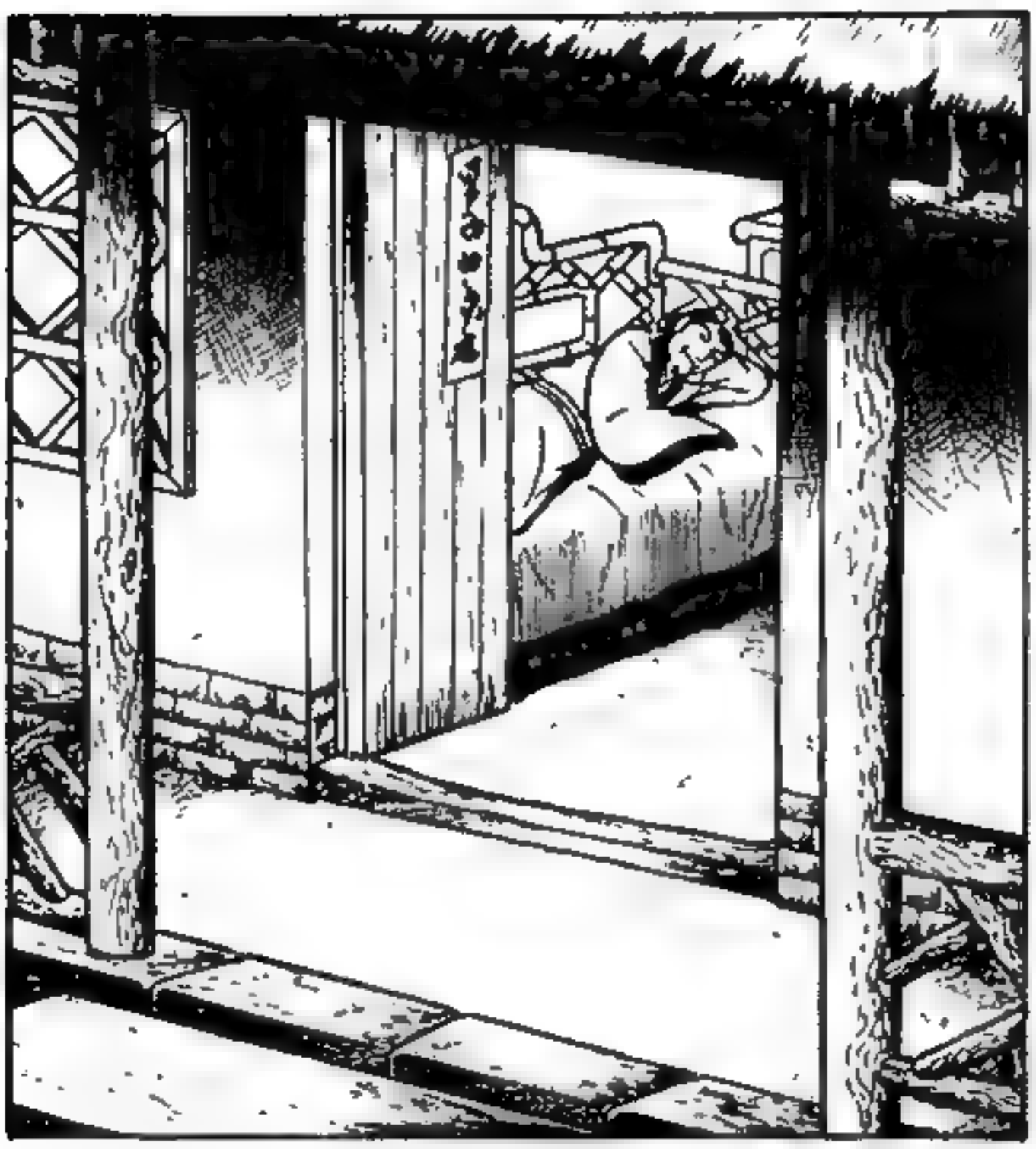
AH, LORD LIU OF XINYE!

HELLO AGAIN, CHILD.

YOU TWO WAIT OUTSIDE WITH THE HORSES.

IS THAT SO? THEN I SHALL WAIT UNTIL HE WAKES UP.

THIS WAY, SIR.




HE'S RIGHT IN THERE.



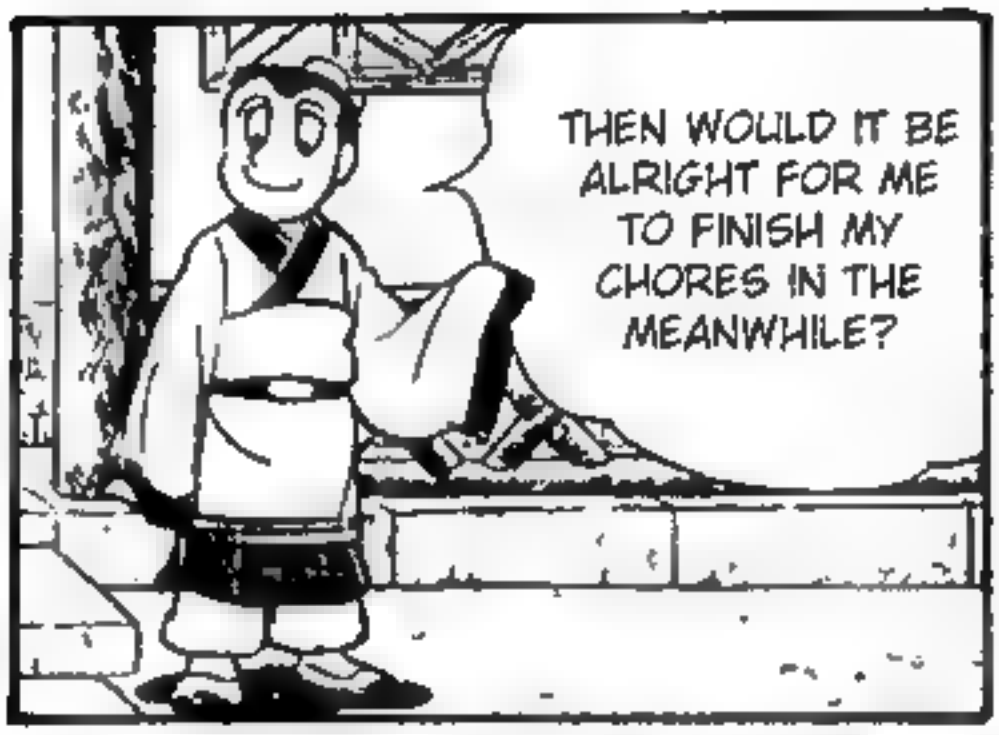

BUT...
THEN I SHALL WAIT RIGHT HERE.


SO THAT'S KONG-MING...


I'M THE ONE WHO'S INTRUDING BY SHOWING UP SUDDENLY. IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT I WAIT UNTIL HE WAKES UP.


NO, NO.
I CAN GO WAKE HIM UP IF YOU WISH, SIR.


YES, OF COURSE. PLEASE DON'T MIND ME AT ALL.


THEN WOULD IT BE ALRIGHT FOR ME TO FINISH MY CHORES IN THE MEANWHILE?


WHAT'S TAKING BROTHER SO LONG?




YAAAWN




AH!

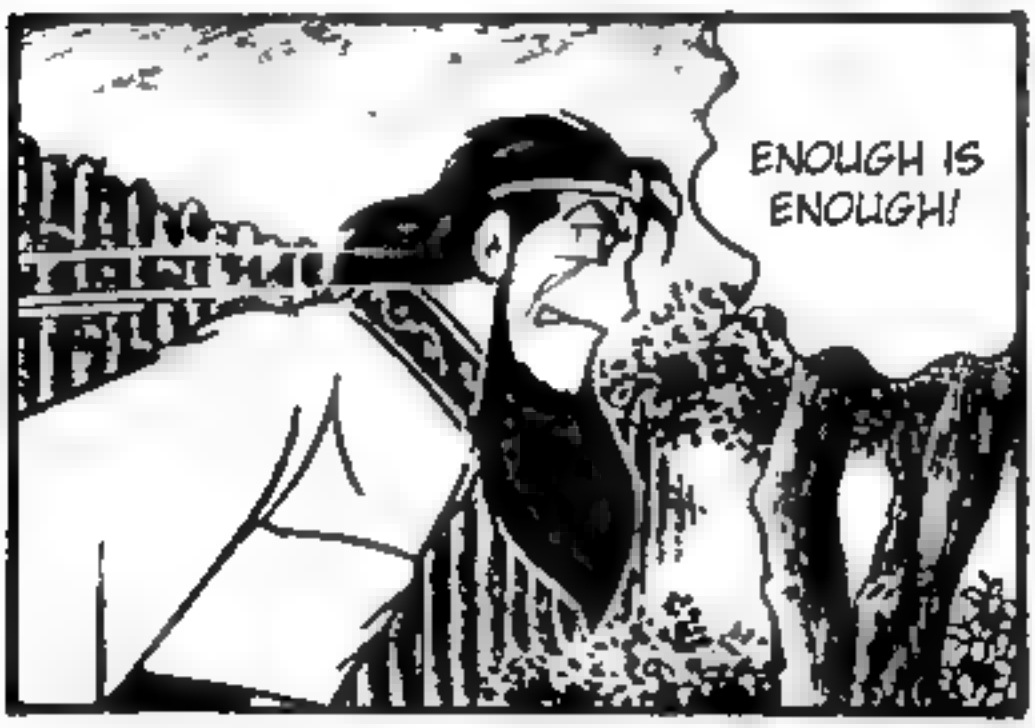


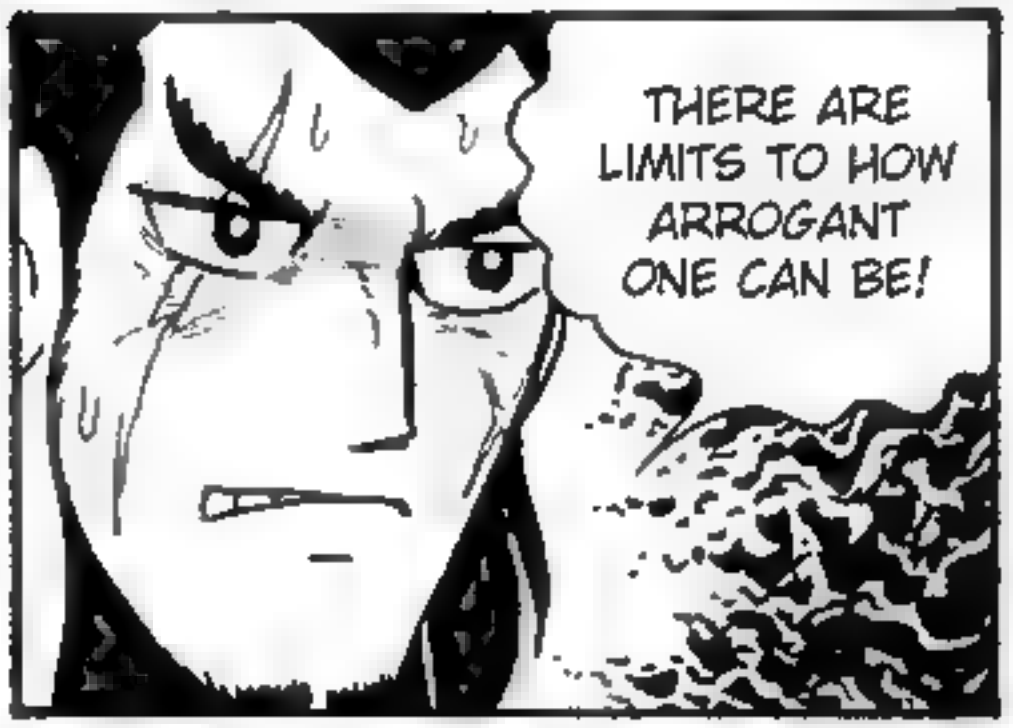

GUAN YU, LOOK!






THAT KONGMING IS BUSY SLEEPING WHILE OUR BROTHER WAITS OUTSIDE!


ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!


THERE ARE LIMITS TO HOW ARROGANT ONE CAN BE!


STEP ASIDE! I'M GOING TO BURN DOWN HIS HOUSE!
WHERE'RE YOU GOING!?

I SAID I'M GOING TO SET FIRE TO HIS HOME. I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM TRY TO SLEEP THROUGH THAT!

YOU'RE GOING TO *WHAT!?*

I'VE ALREADY MADE MY MIND, DON'T TRY TO STOP ME. YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY SUGESTING THAT I JUST STAND STILL AND LET OUR LORD BE *THIS* INSULTED, ARE YOU?

HAVE YOU LOST IT!?

WHY CAN'T YOU COMPRE-HEND OUR LORD'S FEELINGS!?

ZHANG FEI, IF YOU REFUSE TO CALM DOWN THEN I SHAN'T FORGIVE YOU!

HOW CAN I UNDERSTAND WHY OUR LORD MUST BE SO INSULTED AND DIS-GRACED JUST TO GET THE HELP OF SOME KID IN HIS TWENTIES!?


MNN...



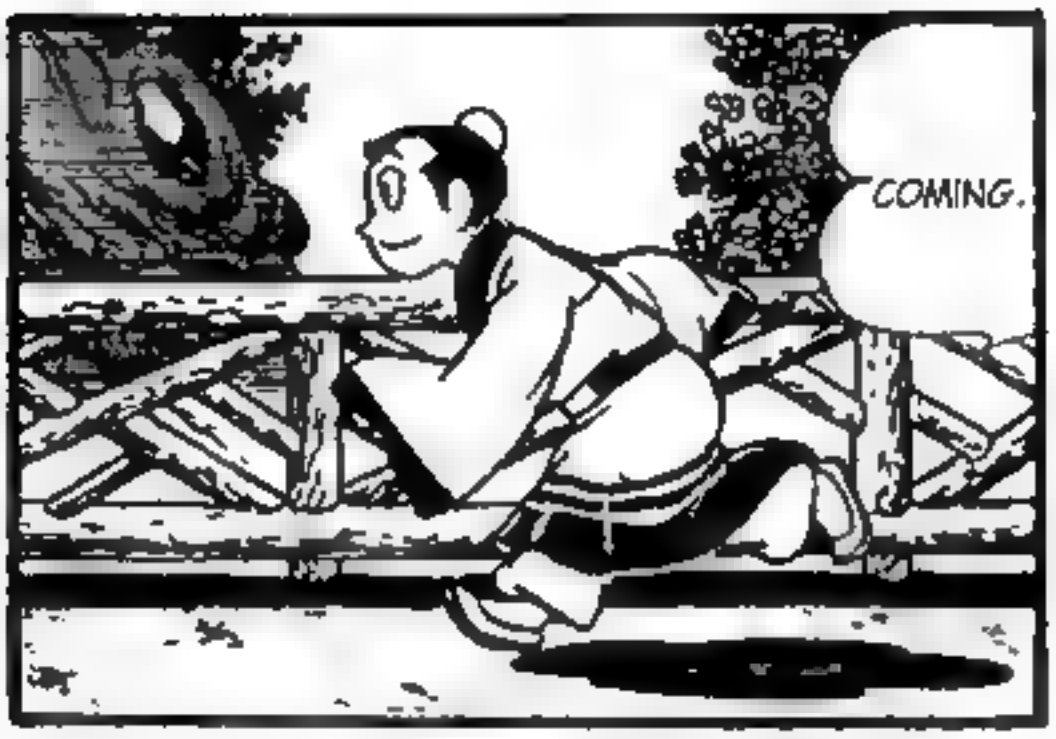

YAWN



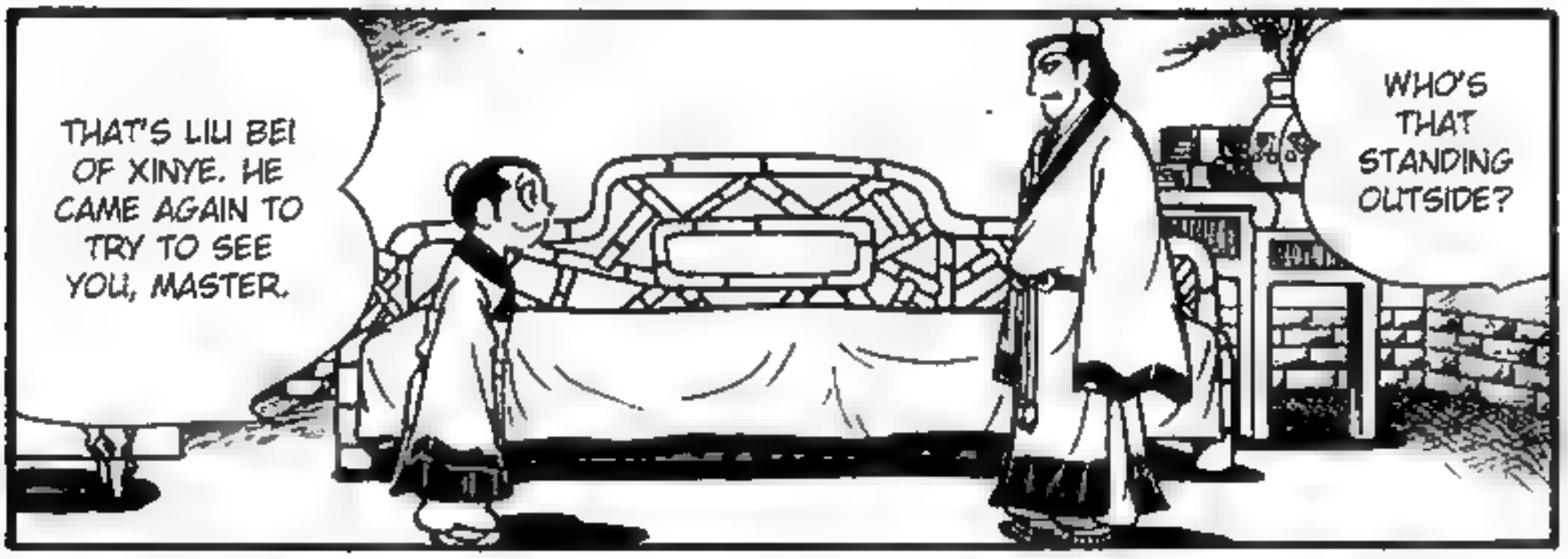

HM?


CAN ANY KNOW WHAT
FATE IS HIS?
YET HAVE I FELT
THROUGHOUT MY LIFE,
THE DAY WOULD COME
AT LAST TO QUIT
THE CALM RETREAT
FOR TOIL AND STRIFE.




COMING.


RING
RING


THAT'S LIU BEI OF XINYE. HE CAME AGAIN TO TRY TO SEE YOU, MASTER.
WHO'S THAT STANDING OUTSIDE?


WELL I WAS GOING TO BUT HE TOLD ME NOT TO...
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAKE ME UP?


LIU BEI!?




IS THAT SO?


PLEASE, COME INSIDE.


EXCUSE ME, THEN.


NO, NOT AT ALL. IN FACT, I MUST ASK SIR TO FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING.
HELLO, SIR. PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR BRAZENLY SLEEPING, NOT KNOWING THAT YOU HAD COME.


IS THAT SO?
I READ THE LETTER THAT SIR LEFT FOR ME LAST TIME.

BUT I AM JUST AN UNLEARNED YOUNG MAN AND I FEAR THAT I CANNOT LIVE UP TO SIR'S EXPECTATIONS.

YES, AND I WAS QUITE MOVED BY SIR'S LOVE FOR OUR EMPIRE.

MASTER SHUI JING AND XU SHU ARE BOTH RENOWNED SCHOLARS WHEREAS I AM A MERE PEASANT WHO IS NOT EVEN QUALIFIED TO TALK ABOUT THE EMPIRE'S AFFAIRS.

YOU ARE TOO MODEST. XU SHU AND MASTER SHUI JING TALK VERY HIGHLY OF YOU AND I DOUBT THAT THOSE WISE MEN COULD BOTH BE WRONG.

JUST AS A MERE PEBBLE CANNOT PASS ITSELF AS A JEWEL, A JEWEL CANNOT PRETEND TO BE A PEBBLE.

BY EMPLOYING ME, SIR WOULD BE THROWING A JEWEL AND PICKING UP A PEBBLE.

DISOBEY-ING PROPER MORALS ...?

A MAN OF SIR'S GENIUS IS BORN ONLY ONCE A CENTURY OR EVEN A MILLE-NIUM. YET DESPITE YOUR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS, YOU DO NOT USE IT AND LIVE IDLY AS A MERE HERMIT. IS THIS NOT DISOBEYING PROPER MORALS AND VIRTUE?

AND THE TIMES TODAY ARE EVEN BLOODIER THAN THE TIMES OF CONFUCIUS. IS IT NOT IMPROPER FOR A MAN OF YOUR INTELLECT TO NOT MAKE GOOD USE OF IT?

DURING THE BLOODY SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD, CONFUCIUS TRAVELLED THROUGH-OUT THESE LANDS TO ENLIGHTEN THE PEOPLE.

THE PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR SUCH A LEADER TO STAND UP.

TROUBLED TIMES LIKE THESE REQUIRE EXCEPTIONAL MEN TO LEAD THE WAY.

SO I BG OF SIR, PLEASE STAND UP FOR THE GOOD OF THIS WORLD.

WITH MY POOR TALENTS ...?

BUT SIR CAN SAVE THIS NATION WITH YOUR TALENTS ALONE.

THEN ALLOW ME TO TEACH YOU A WAY.

ALTHOUGH I WOULD NOT LOSE TO ANYONE IN MY LOVE FOR THE PEOPLE, I'M AFRAID I AM CURRENTLY NO MATCH FOR THE MIGHTY CAO CAO.

THINK OF IT AS MY WAY OF SAYING THANK YOU FOR VISITING A MERE FARMER THREE TIMES.

AS A RESULT, IT HAS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO UNITE THESE LANDS.

WHILE IN THE SOUTH, SUN QUAN'S WU HAS MANY CAPABLE OFFICERS AND RICH FERTILE LANDS FOR IT TO BE EASILY CONQUERED AS WELL.

CERTAINLY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE NOW, CAO CAO'S WEI* IS TOO STRONG TO CONQUER.

NO.

BUT DOES THAT MEAN NOBODY CAN CONTEND WITH WU AND WEI ANYMORE?

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE LANDS OF HAN. THERE IS STILL A REGION WHERE EVEN CAO CAO NOR SUN QUAN'S INFLUENCE DOES NOT REACH.

*WEI HERE REFERS TO THE REGION IN NORTHERN CHINA THAT CAO CAO CONTROLS AND WHERE THE STATE OF WEI ONCE EXISTED IN 475–221 BC

THAT IS WHERE SIR MUST SET UP YOUR BASE OF POWER IN ORDER TO DESTROY CAO CAO'S AMBITIONS.

I AM REFERRING TO JINGZHOU AND YIZHOU. IN SHORT, THE 54 COUNTIES OF SHU.*

YES. YOU MUST GIVE UP ON REUNITING THE EMPIRE TEMPORARILY AND DIVIDE IT IN THREE FIRST.

YOU MEAN TO DIVIDE THE EMPIRE IN THREE?

AS FOR YIZHOU, ITS RULER LIU ZHANG IS IGNORANT AND THE PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING UNDER HIS POOR RULE. SIR MUST CONQUER JINGZHOU AND YIZHOU BEFORE YOU CAN COMPETE WITH CAO CAO.

LIU BIAO OF JINGZHOU IS ALREADY AN OLD MAN AND NEITHER OF HIS TWO SONS ARE FIT TO SURVIVE IN THESE CHAOTIC TIMES.

*SHU HERE REFERS TO THE REGION IN WESTERN CHINA WHERE THE STATE OF SHU ONCE EXISTED AROUND 1046-316 BC

THE RICH FERTILE FARMLANDS, CONVENIENCE IN LOCATION, AND WIDE OPEN PLAINS... THIS IS THE PROMISED LAND THAT SIR MUST OBTAIN.

THIS IS A MAP SHOWING THE 54 COUNTIES OF SHU.

YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, SIR.

BUT LIU BIAO AND LIU ZHANG ARE BOTH DISTANT RELATIVES OF MINE. I WOULD LOSE THE PEOPLE'S WILL IF I STOLE THE LANDS OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS.

AS FOR YIZHOU, I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED THAT THE PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING UNDER LIU ZHANG'S POOR RULE. NOBODY WOULD RESENT YOU IF YOU FREED THE PEOPLE FROM HIS TYRANNY.

A DOCTOR FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME THAT LIU BIAO HAS NOT MUCH MORE TO LIVE. NOT ONLY THAT, SINCE SIR IS DEEPLY TRUSTED BY LIU BIAO, IT WOULD NOT BE UNSEEMLY TO INHERIT JINGZHOU AFTER HIS DEATH.

WASN'T SIR'S WISH TO RESTORE THE EMPIRE AND BRING PEACE TO THE PEOPLE?

BUT EVEN SO...

IT APPEARS THAT SIR IS WORRYING TOO MUCH ABOUT TRIFLING MATTERS AND LOSING SIGHT OF THE GREATER PICTURE.

I'M SORRY BUT I MUST DECLINE.

WON'T YOU PLEASE CONTINUE TO LEND ME YOUR WISDOM WHILE BY MY SIDE?

YOU'RE RIGHT...

I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST FOR ME TO STAY HERE AND CONTINUE ON WITH MY FARMING AND READINGS.

THE ADVICE I GAVE JUST NOW WAS ONLY TO MAKE UP FOR SIR'S TWO VISITS BEFORE.

.....

IS THE ANSWER STILL A NO?

WITH MY TALENTS, I SHALL NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH A TENTH OF MY GOALS. PLEASE, SIR...

BUT SIR HAS ENOUGH TALENT TO CORRECTLY ANALYZE THE POLITICAL SITUATION OF HAN EVEN WHILE BEING HOLED UP HERE. THAT IS PRECISELY WHY I BELIEVE SIR IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME ACCOMPLISH MY GOALS.

ALL BECAUSE OF MY WORTHLESS SELF, I FEAR THAT 400 YEARS OF HAN SHALL COME TO AN END.

HOW REGRET-TABLE.


I UNDER-
STAND
SIR'S
FEELINGS.






Y-YOU'VE
REALLY
DECIDED TO LEND
ME A HAND!?
VERY WELL,
THEN. IF YOU
DON'T MIND MY
UNTALENTED
SELF, THEN
PLEASE ALLOW
ME TO WORK
FOR SIR.


RING
RING


THANK
YOU, SIR.

HE HAS JUST COME BACK, MASTER.

WHERE IS MY BROTHER, JUN?

COMING.

RIGHT AWAY.

CALL HIM HERE.

I'VE DECIDED TO GO WITH LORD LIU BEI.

YES.

YOU CALLED, BROTHER?

YES, BROTHER. I WILL TEND TO THE FARM AND OUR HOME IN YOUR ABSENCE.

I SHALL RETURN HOME IF I SUCEED IN MY TASKS.

DESPITE MY LACK OF TALENT, LORD LIU HAS HONOURED ME WITH 3 VISITS AND EARNESTLY PLEADED FOR MY HELP. EVEN I, AS LAZY AS I MAY BE, CANNOT SIT STILL ANY LONGER.

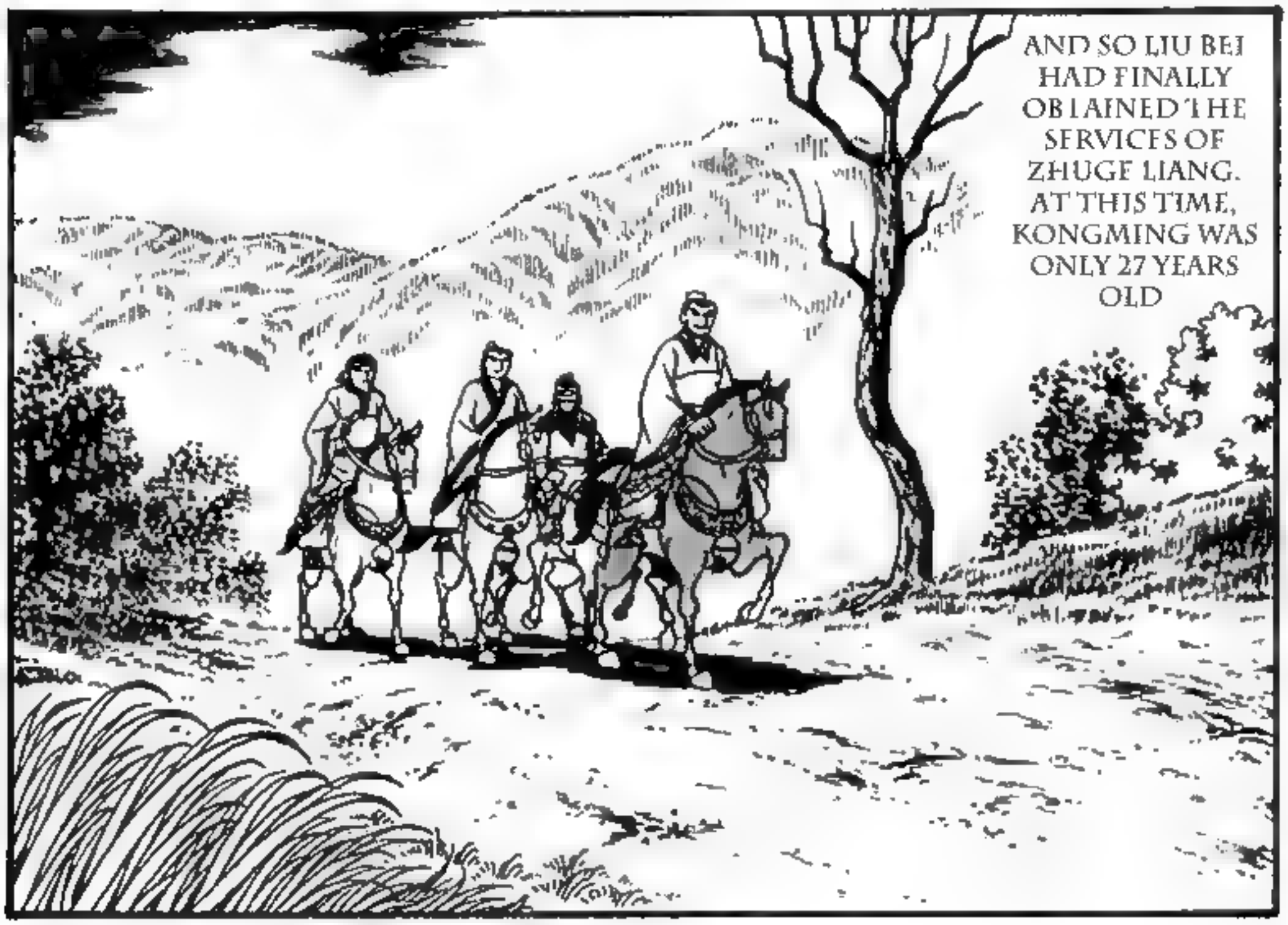




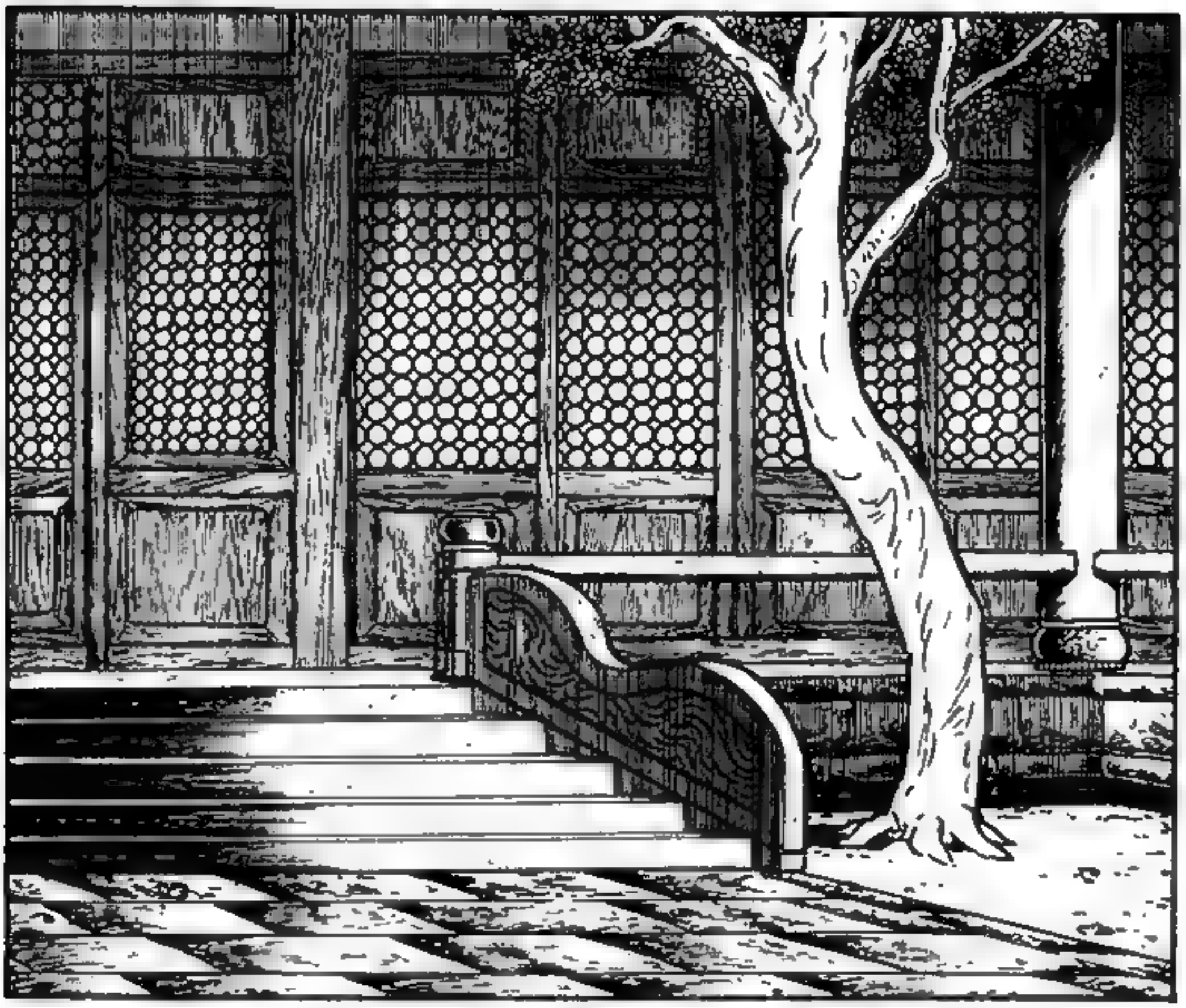





THAT IS EXCELLENT NEWS.
REJOICE MY BROTHERS, FOR MASTER KONGMING HAS DECIDED TO LEND US HIS WISDOM.


AND SO LIU BEI HAD FINALLY OBTAINED THE SERVICES OF ZHUGE LIANG. AT THIS TIME, KONGMING WAS ONLY 27 YEARS OLD

DOMESTIC STRIFE





LET HIM IN.

WHAT COULD IT BE ABOUT?

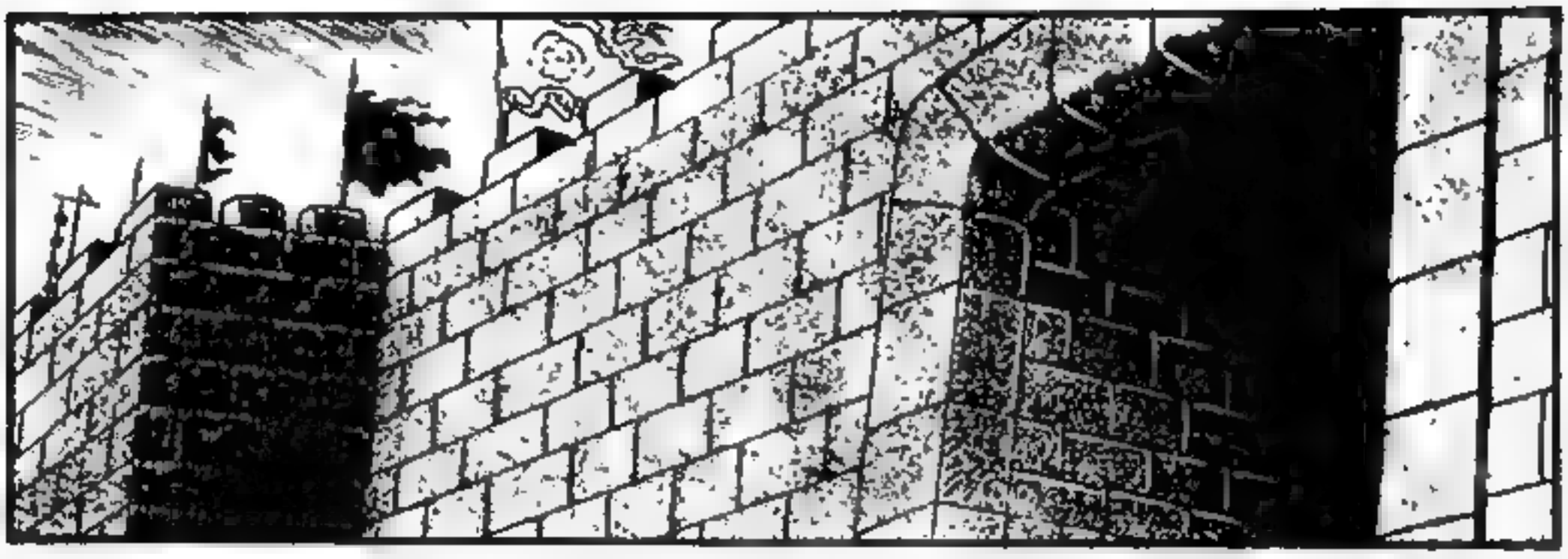
I BRING THIS LETTER FROM MY LORD, LIU BIAO.

IT SEEMS THAT HE HAS SOMETHING URGENT TO DISCUSS AND THUS REQUIRES MY IMMEDIATE PRESENCE.

YES.

THEN LET US GO AT ONCE.

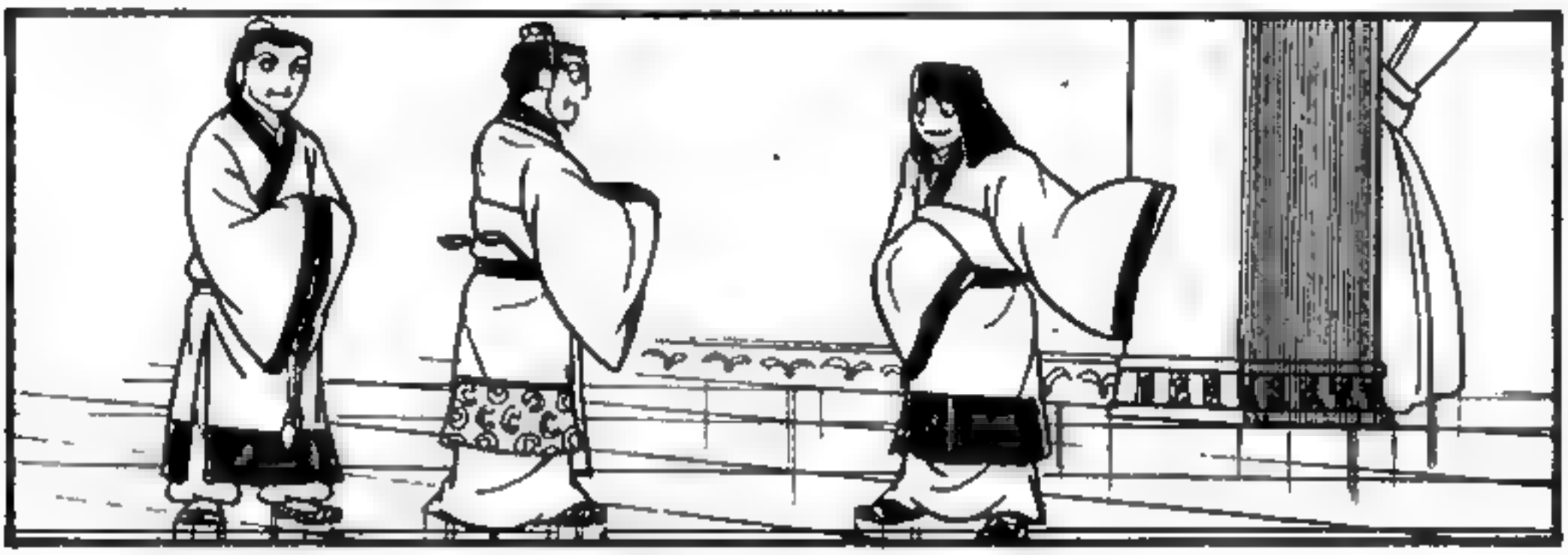

YES.
MAKE PREPARA-TIONS TO LEAVE AT ONCE.
I WONDER WHAT THE URGENT MATTER COULD BE...?




GOOD, LET HIM IN AT ONCE.

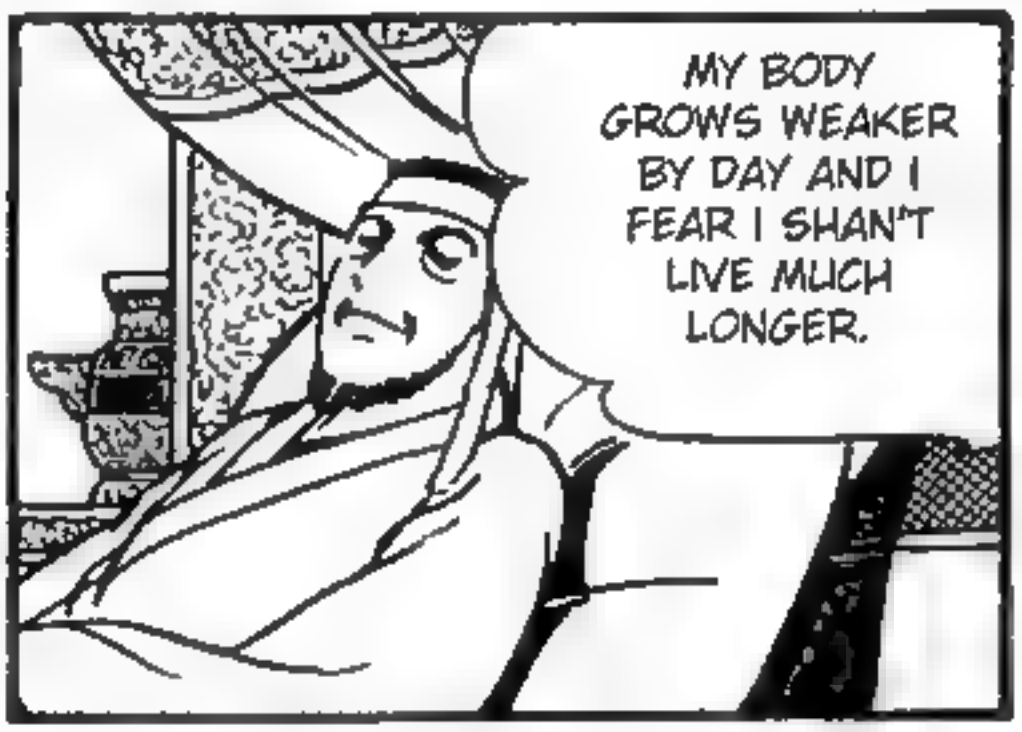

YES, SIR.
LIU BEI HAS ARRIVED?


YES.




WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE MATTER?
THANK YOU FOR COMING, XUANDE.


SIR SHOULD NOT SAY SUCH WEAK THINGS.


MY BODY GROWS WEAKER BY DAY AND I FEAR I SHAN'T LIVE MUCH LONGER.


WOULD YOU PLEASE BECOME THE RULER OF JINGZHOU AFTER MY DEATH?




THE MAIN REASON I'VE CALLED YOU HERE TODAY IS TO DISCUSS JINGZHOU'S FUTURE.

NEITHER OF MY SONS ARE FIT TO SURVIVE IN THESE HARD TIMES.

BUT DOESN'T SIR ALREADY HAVE TWO SONS? WHY THE SUDDEN REQUEST?

HMM...

I'M AFRAID THE SAME MIGHT BE SAID OF MYSELF AS WELL.

PLEASE GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT THEN.

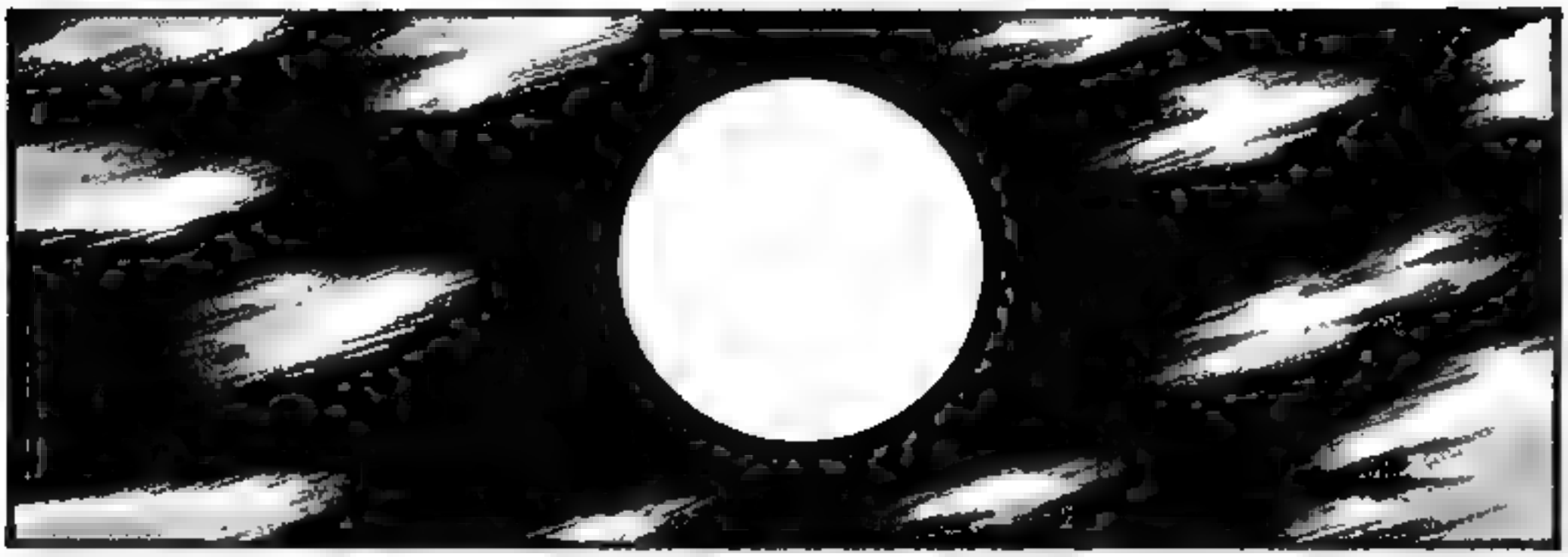
I'M SURE THAT JINGZHOU'S PEACE CAN BE GUARANTEED IF YOU BECOME ITS IMPERIAL PROTECTOR. WON'T YOU RECONSIDER?


BUT IT'S NOT AS IF MY LORD WOULD BE STEALING JINGZHOU.

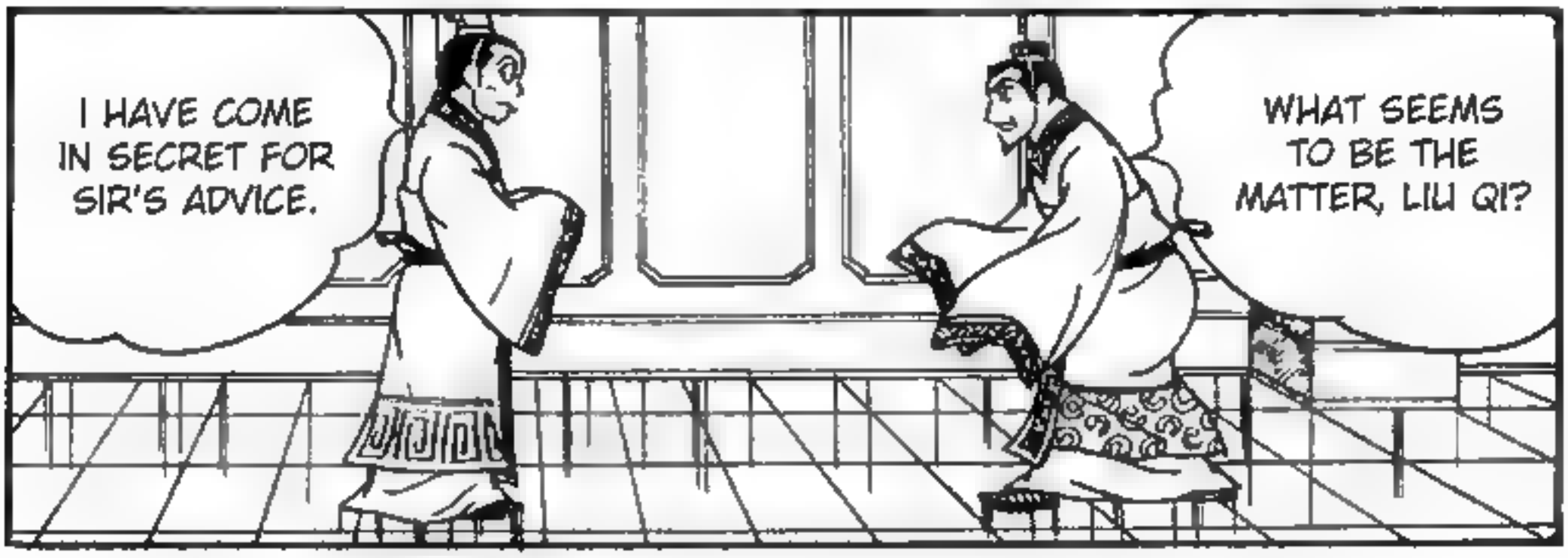

TRUE, BUT IF I ACCEPT THE OFFER, I WOULD BE SECRETLY DELIGHTED AT HIS DEATH ON SOME LEVEL DEEP IN MY SUBCONSCIOUS.


I DO NOT WANT TO TURN MY SAVIOUR'S MISFORTUNE INTO MY BLESSING.
WHY DIDN'T YOU ACCEPT HIS OFFER? IT WOULD BE A GREAT FIRST STEP TO FOUNDING SHU.


TAKING THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED BY, I SEE.




WHAT? LIU BIAO'S ELDEST SON LIU QI HAS COME TO SEE ME THIS LATE IN THE NIGHT?


I HAVE COME IN SECRET FOR SIR'S ADVICE.
WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE MATTER, LIU QI?

AS MY FATHER GROWS MORE ILL, MY LIFE IS IN PERIL.

A MATER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

ADVICE? ON WHAT MATTER?

SUCH AS?

MY STEP-MOTHER GROWS EVEN BOLDER IN HER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS SO SHE CAN PLACE HER SON AS THE HEIR.

SUCH AS POISONING MY FOOD...


IS THERE NO GOOD WAY?


IT IS NOT MY PLACE TO SAY.

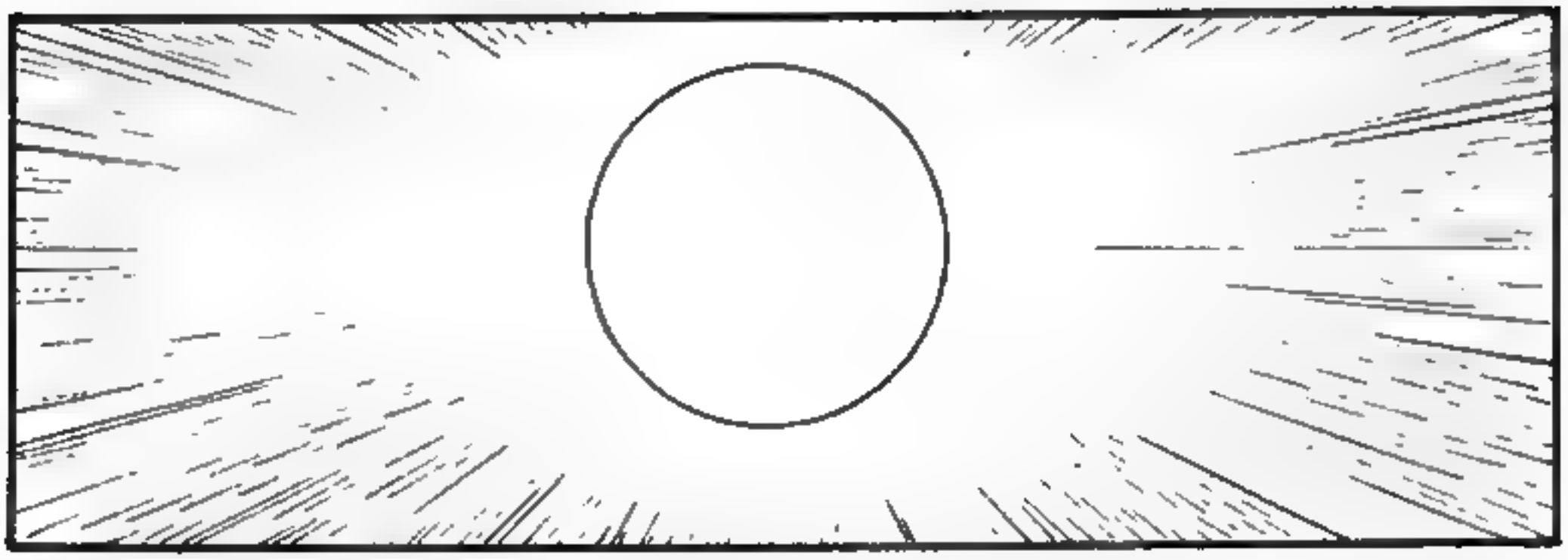

SINCE THIS IS A FAMILY AFFAIR, I SUGGEST WE STAY WELL OUT OF IT.
KONGMING, DO YOU HAVE ANY GOOD ADVICE?


DO NOT WORRY, I SHALL HAVE KONGMING VISIT YOU TOMORROW.


NO, NOT AT ALL.
IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE COME IN VAIN. I APOLOGIZE FOR DISTURBING YOU SO LATE AT NIGHT.


THANK YOU, SIR.


AND WHEN HE COMES, TRY DOING...




YES, MY LORD.
KONGMING, I MUST RETURN THE CALL FOR LIU QI'S VISIT LAST NIGHT. HOWEVER, MY STOMACH IS ACTING UP AND SO I MUST ASK YOU TO GO IN MY STEAD.



KONGMING IS HERE!?

YES, SIR.

BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE HIM AS COURTEOUSLY AS YOU CAN.

I HAVE COME TO RETURN THE CALL FOR SIR'S VISIT IN MY LORD'S STEAD.

AH, THANK YOU FOR COMING.


BUT I INSIST. WHAT ABOUT JUST A SINGLE GLASS?

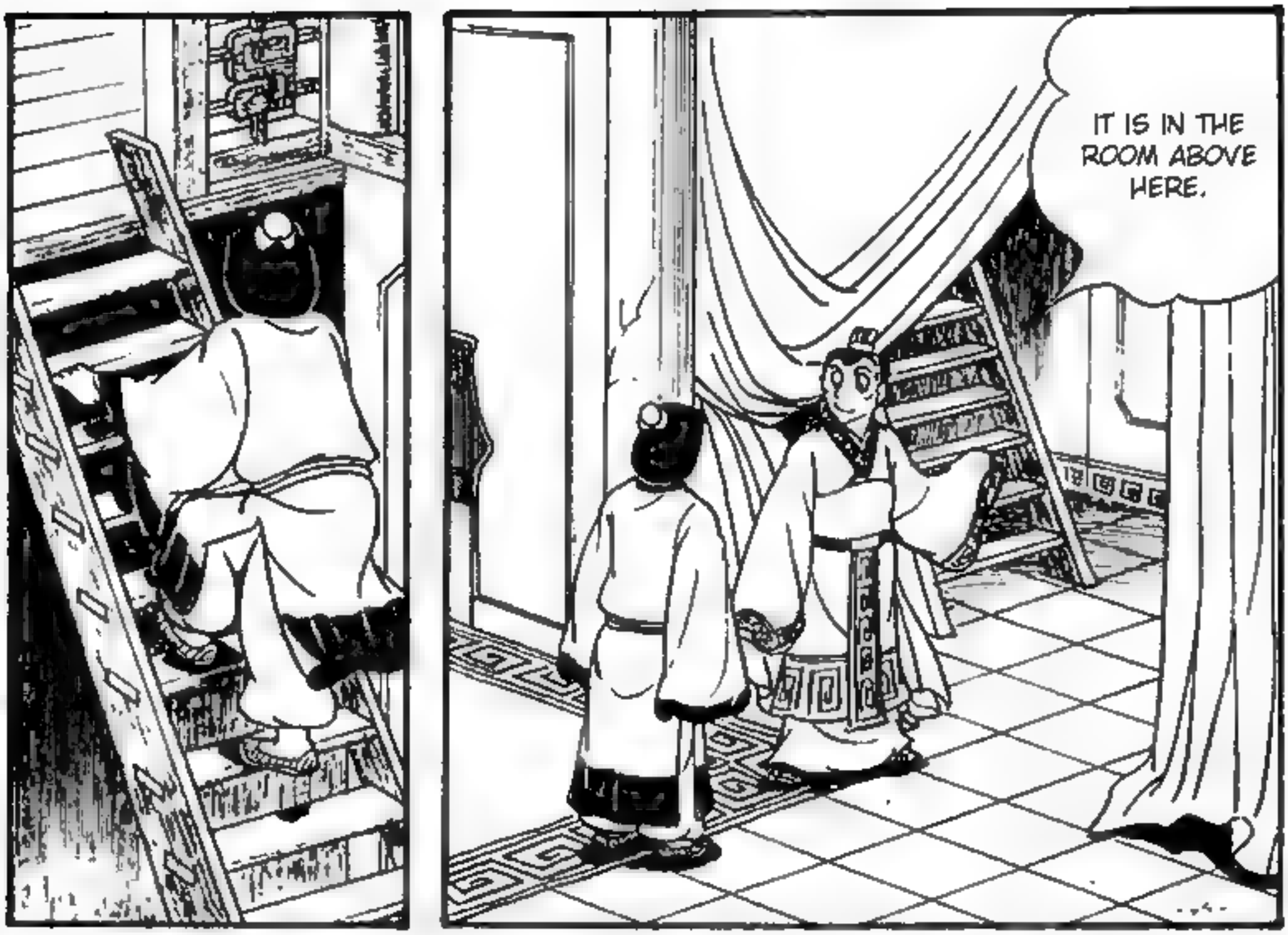

ALRIGHT THEN.


NO THANK YOU.
PLEASE, COME THIS WAY AND LET US ENJOY A MEAL TOGETHER.


IS THAT SO?
BY THE WAY, I HAPPEN TO HAVE A VERY RARE OLD BOOK IN MY POSSESSION.


THEN COME THIS WAY.


I'D BE GLAD TO.
WOULD SIR LIKE TO TAKE A LOOK?


IT IS IN THE ROOM ABOVE HERE.


HM?


MY APOLOGIES FOR DECEIVING SIR BUT I WISHED TO ASK FOR SIR'S ADVICE ONCE MORE.


I DON'T SEE ANY BOOKS HERE.

NO, I DO NOT.

IS THERE NO WISDOM SIR CAN PASS ONTO ME?

THERE'S A SAYING THAT GOES, "SOW NOT DISSENSION AMONG CLOSE FRIENDS AND RELATIVES." IT IS NOT PROPER FOR A STRANGER SUCH AS MYSELF TO INVOLVE HIMSELF IN THE PROBLEMS OF ANOTHER FAMILY.

WHY MUST I INVOLVE MYSELF IN ANOTHER FAMILY'S AFFAIRS?

I BEG OF YOU, SIR. PLEASE...!

THEN I ADVISE YOU THINK UP A METHOD TO SAVE YOURSELF.

BUT I SHALL BE KILLED FOR CERTAIN LEST I DO SOMETHING.

AH!

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

WITH THE LADDER GONE, NOBODY WILL BE ABLE TO EAVESDROP ON OUR CONVERSATION.

I EARNESTLY ASK ONCE MORE. THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH FOR ME.

IF SOMEONE OVERHEARD US, IT MIGHT CAUSE HARM FOR SIR.

I HAVE NO GOOD ADVICE I CAN SHARE.

PLEASE LEND ME SIR'S WISDOM.

IS ANYONE DOWN THERE!?

NOW PLEASE LET ME GO.




THEN MY FATE IS SEALED.

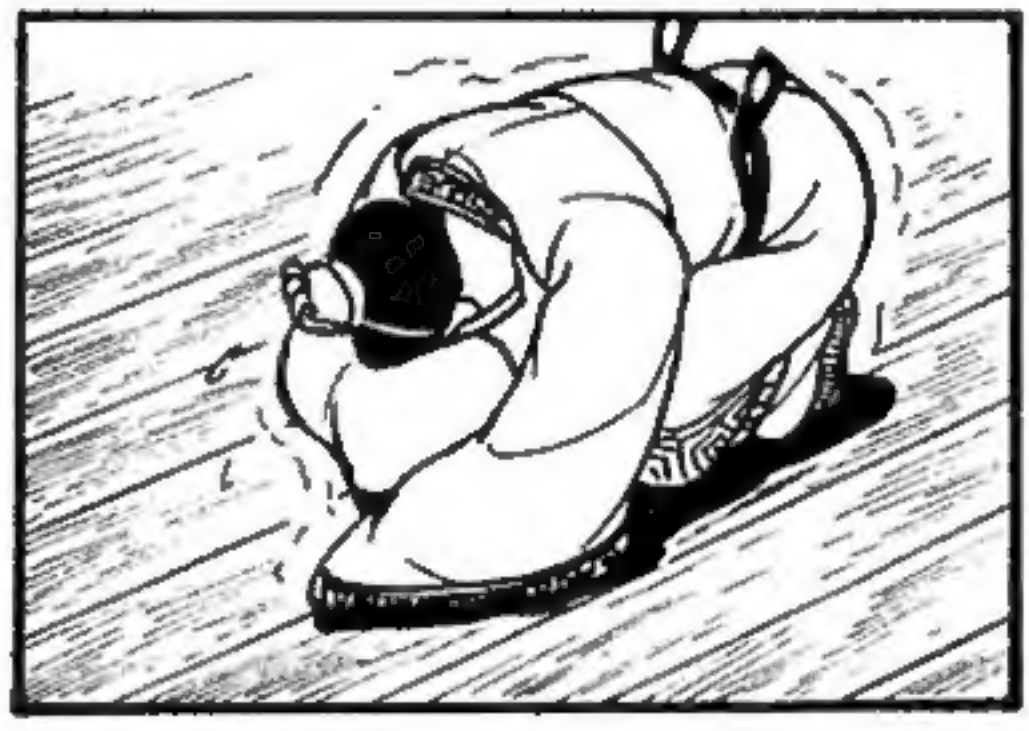




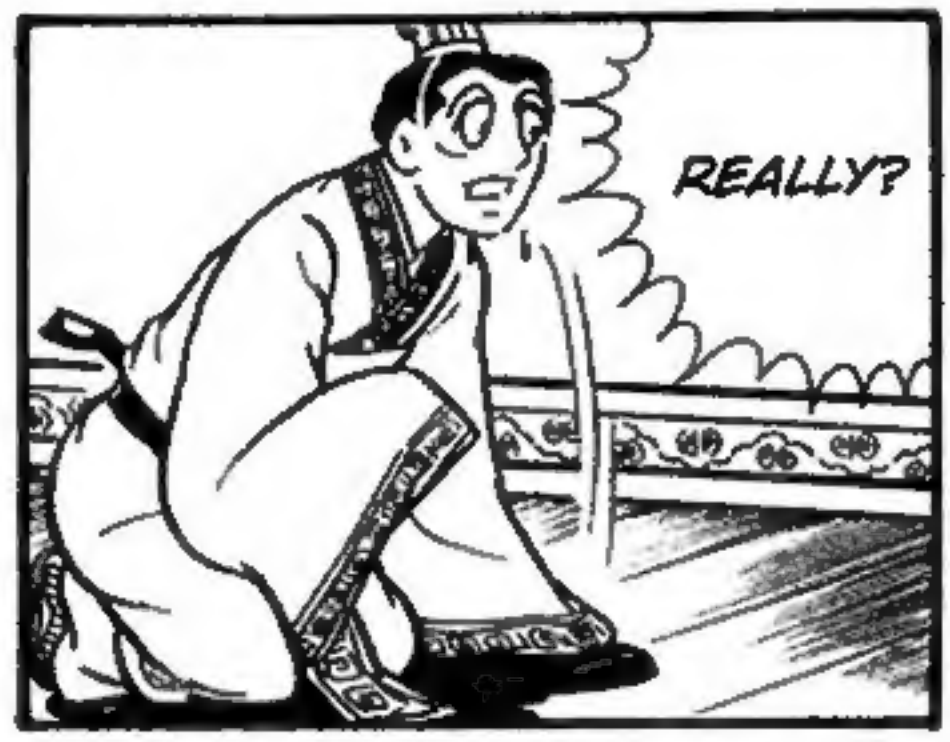

PLEASE LET GO OF ME! SINCE I SHALL BE KILLED EITHER WAY, I WOULD RATHER DO IT WITH MY OWN HANDS!


STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?


ALRIGHT, THEN. SEEING AS HOW DESPERATE YOU ARE, I SHALL TELL YOU ONE METHOD.









TRANSLATED BY HOX

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三国志

21

横山 光輝

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